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**NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS**  
**Imagine** **FX**

**NEW SERIES!**  
**FIGURE**  
**DRAWING**

**PART 1: Start drawing your best-ever figures today!**

Including...

**STEP-BY-STEP VIDEO**  
**FROM PATRICK J JONES**



**ART SKILLS**

**PAINT EPIC SCALE**

Film concept artist **Wayne Haag**  
on how to create greater depth

**STUDY THE GREATS**  
**IN PROCREATE**

Follow the Old Master  
techniques on your iPad



**15**  
**BEST ONLINE**  
**ART SCHOOLS**

**ALSO INSIDE**

**EXPLORE THE STUDIO**  
**OF SIXMOREVODKA**  
**CREATE A 3D CONCEPT**  
**FOR VIDEO GAMES**  
**WORK BETTER WITH**  
**COLOUR CONTRASTS**

**SHAUN TAN! THE MELANCHOLIC ART OF THE OSCAR-WINNING STORYTELLER**



IMAGE COURTESY OF KRIS COSTA



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## Welcome to... NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX



Question: Do you think you're a good artist? I ask you this because in his interview over on page 38, Shaun Tan opined that "he finally knows what he's doing." These words came from an accomplished artist who not only has written and illustrated many books, he also bagged

himself an Oscar all of seven years ago. Clearly, his perception of knowing what he's doing is very different from mine!

How we see ourselves is often at odds with how others see us. If you answered "no" to the question above, why not try seeking out critiques from trusted friends, fellow artists and family? They'll spot the best in you that you may have overlooked.

Also, don't forget to send in your art so we can help showcase it to the world. Turn to page 10 for more info on how to do this – and to see the talented artists who made the grade this month.

We're giving away a free eBook for those who sign up to our weekly newsletter. Page 60 has everything you need to know. Oh, and why not join over 20,000 artists and give us a follow on Instagram (@imaginefxmagazine)? As ever, please let me know your thoughts at the email address below...

*Claire*

**Claire Howlett, Editor**  
[claire@imaginefx.com](mailto:claire@imaginefx.com)

### EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...

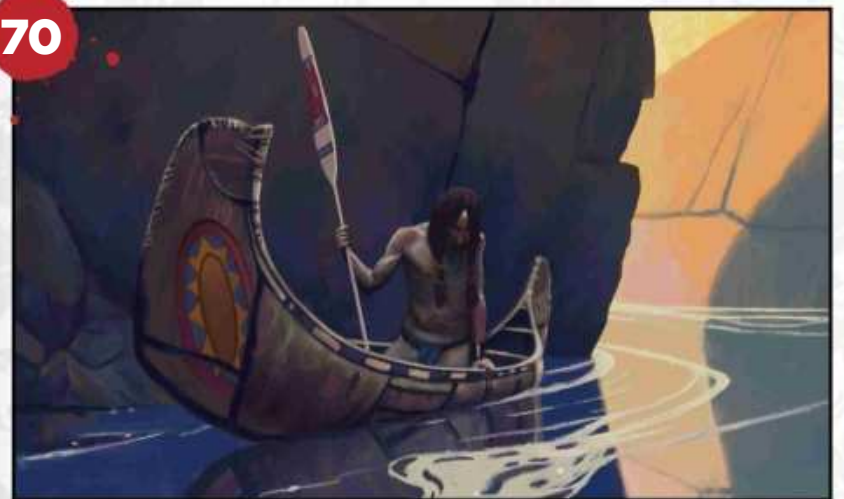
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#### Artist in Residence: Lyon's share

Another jaw-dropping art studio, another vivid daydream pretending that it's mine...

70



#### Master study in Procreate

I wonder what the Old Master artists would make of a digital painting on an iPad? The mind boggles.

106



#### Wayne Haag's guide to scale

I really loved this workshop. Wayne's thoughtful and honest approach really shone through.

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 <http://ifxm.ag/ifxnewsletter>

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### Amazing new gift!

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**Turn the page for more details...**



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\*Not available for digital-only subscriptions



ImagineFX December 2018



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## KEY FEATURES

### Charge multiple devices at maximum speed

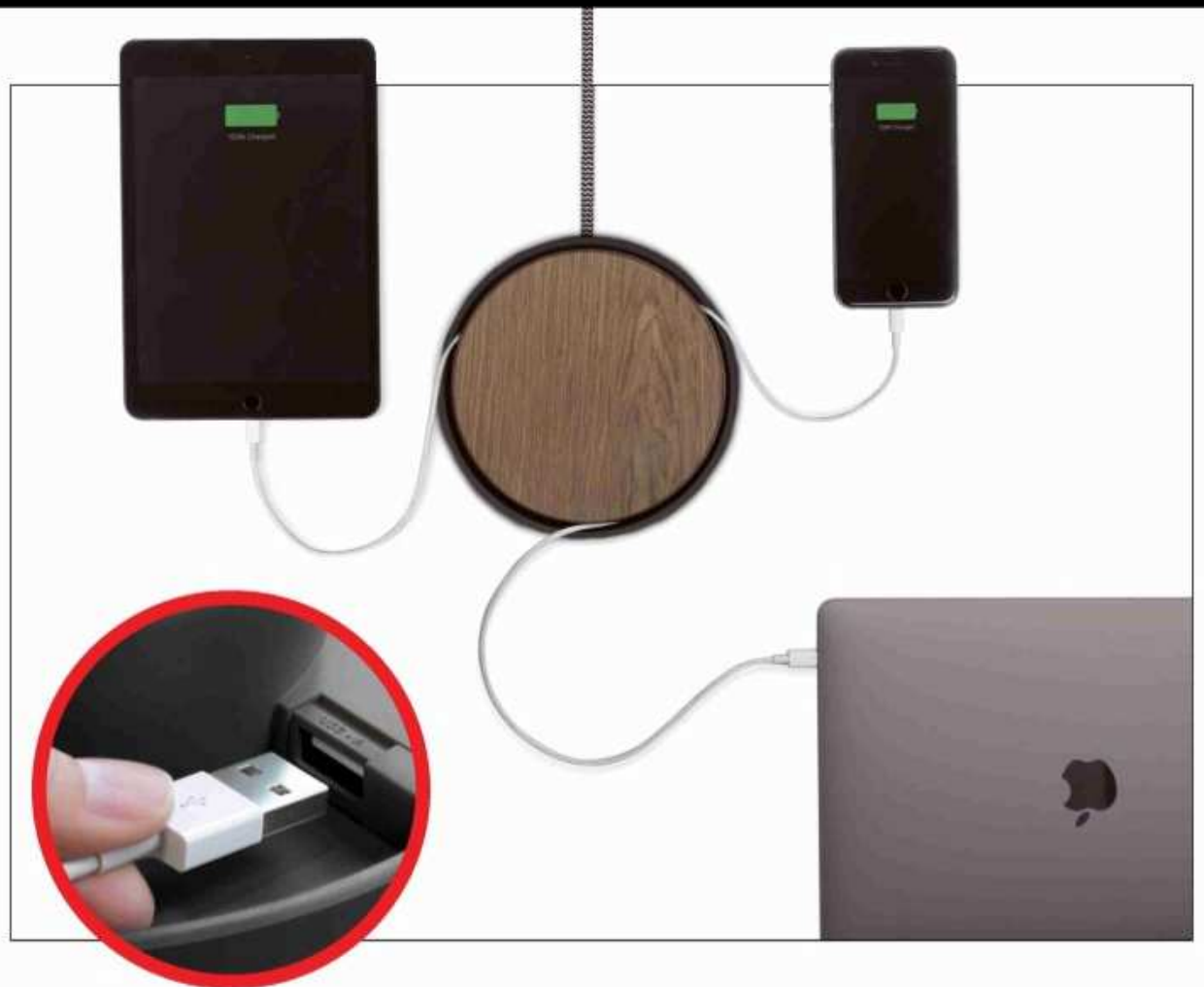
Three-port USB charging station, featuring Smart IC technology, ensures safe, high-speed charging.

### Precise cable management

Holds up to 20 feet of cables, neatly wound around its centre for clutter-free and untangled charging.

### Stylish design

A capacitive touch sensor emits an ambient light, enabling you to find your cables in the dark with ease.



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For digital-only subscriptions turn to **page 36**





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You submit your art to us and we then show your gorgeous art to the world!

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Discover how you can learn from the best in the art business without enrolling in a lengthy, expensive course – or even stepping outside your own home.

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We find out how the Australian picture book artist and author goes about creating uniquely strange stories for children.

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### 54 **Sketchbook: Sam Hogg**

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STUDIO  
PROFILE

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Artist in Residence:  
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Sketchbook: Sam Hogg

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Old Masters in Procreate

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Gavin O'Donnell explains how analysing the work of the Old Masters is a good way to improve your artistic abilities.

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Explore this month's selection of the finest traditional artworks around, which has been sent in by you!

### 106 Workshop: Achieving scale in your paintings

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### 114 First Impressions: Chris Seaman

Find out why this American illustrator most identifies with his own line of miniature monster portraits.





NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

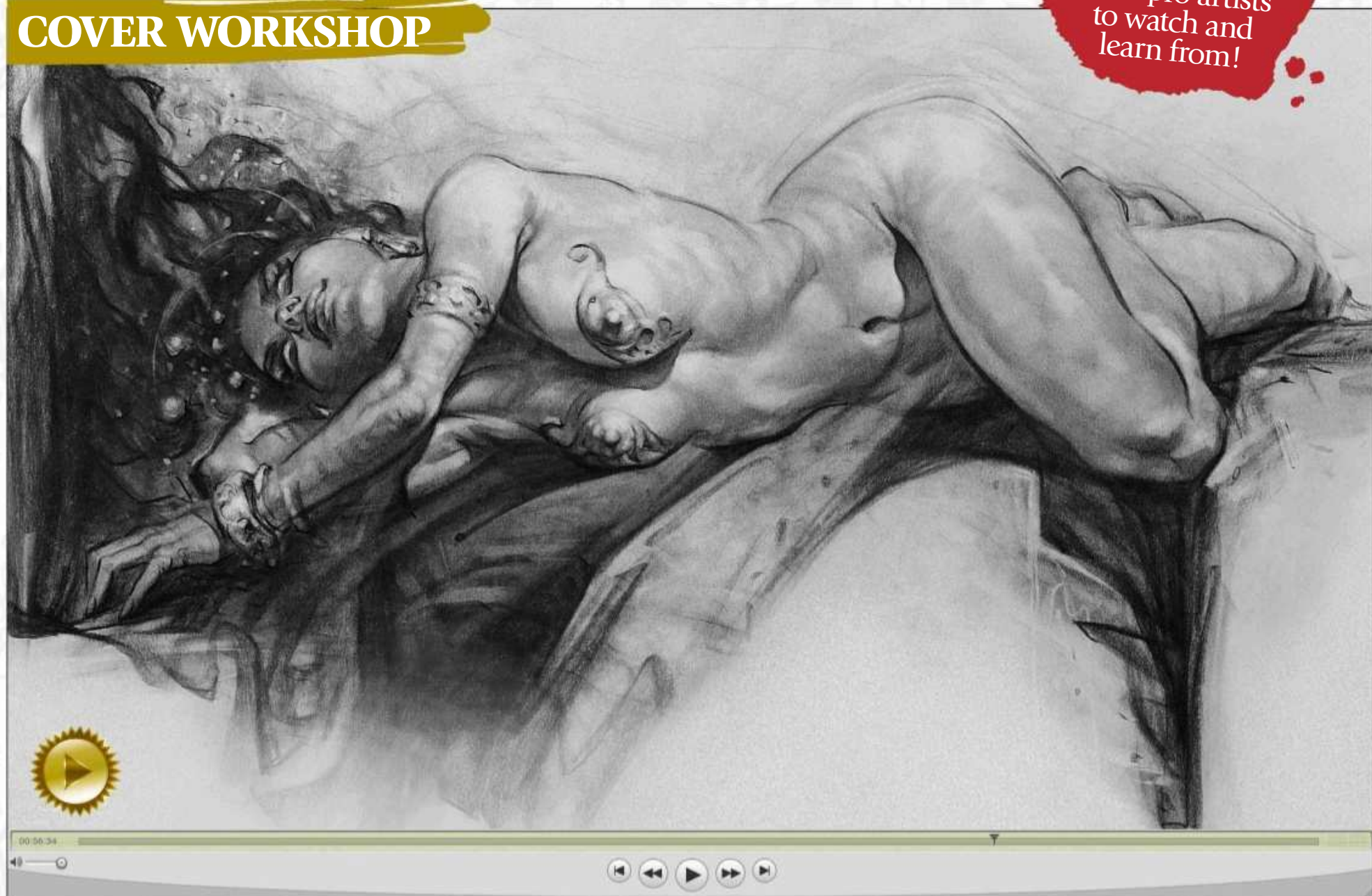
# Resources

Getting hold of this issue's videos and custom brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <https://ifxm.ag/figure167drawing>

**OVER  
2 HOURS**

of video tutorials  
from pro artists  
to watch and  
learn from!

## COVER WORKSHOP



### GET YOUR RESOURCES

You're three steps away from  
this issue's resource files...

#### 1 Go to the website

Type this into your browser's  
address bar (not the search bar):  
<https://ifxm.ag/figure167drawing>

#### 2 Find the files you want

Search through the list of  
resources to download.

#### 3 Download what you need...

...or alternatively watch the  
videos on our YouTube page.

## Reference shots are only half the story

Patrick J Jones' series on figure drawing starts this month on page 62. In his workshop video, you'll see how he takes the model's expressive pose and then puts his own style into the drawing.





## WORKSHOPS



**ImagineFX**  
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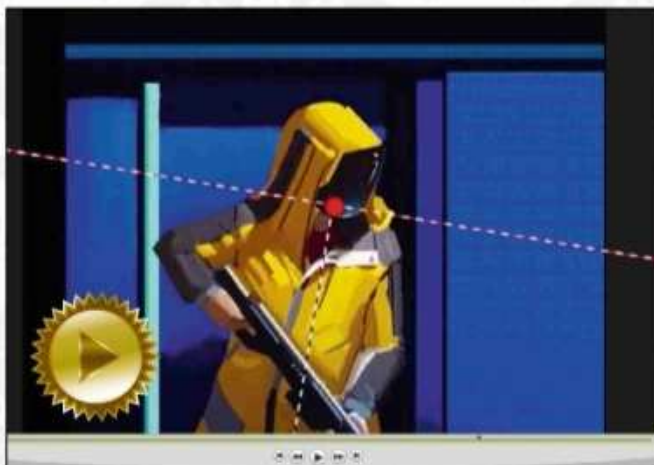
## How to go from a 2D concept to a detailed 3D model

Watch how Baj Singh sculpts a mammoth with a variety of 3D tools. There's more on page 78.



## Make time to learn from the Old Masters

That's what Gavin O'Donnell does on page 70 – and watch his video for further insights.



## Create art with visual impact

Ricardo Guimaraes mixes colours on page 86.

## Landscapes in Photoshop

We review this training video on page 97.

## PLUS 10 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...



### FLAT-SOLID

Ricardo Guimaraes' custom brush enables him to create bold textured strokes in his art.



### RIC PAINT

The tentacle lurking at the bottom of Ricardo's composition was painted using this custom brush.



### MULTIPLE SQUARES (SHARPER)

Ricardo used this brush to create sparkles and other airborne elements to add extra life to his painting.



# FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



## Lucy Georgina Wilson

**LOCATION:** Australia **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** [www.lucygart.com](http://www.lucygart.com)

Lucy loves fantasy, dark stories and all things whimsical. "I like to think of my own art as small windows into the world inside my mind," she says.

### 1 ZEUS

"The Greek god of the sky and giver of justice. The gods of Olympus all had their weaknesses - his was an appetite for beautiful women, which often got him into trouble."

### 2 DRAGON PRIESTESS

"A painting that started as a simple contrast between the background and a foreground figure. The more I rendered her, the more she came to life."

2



1

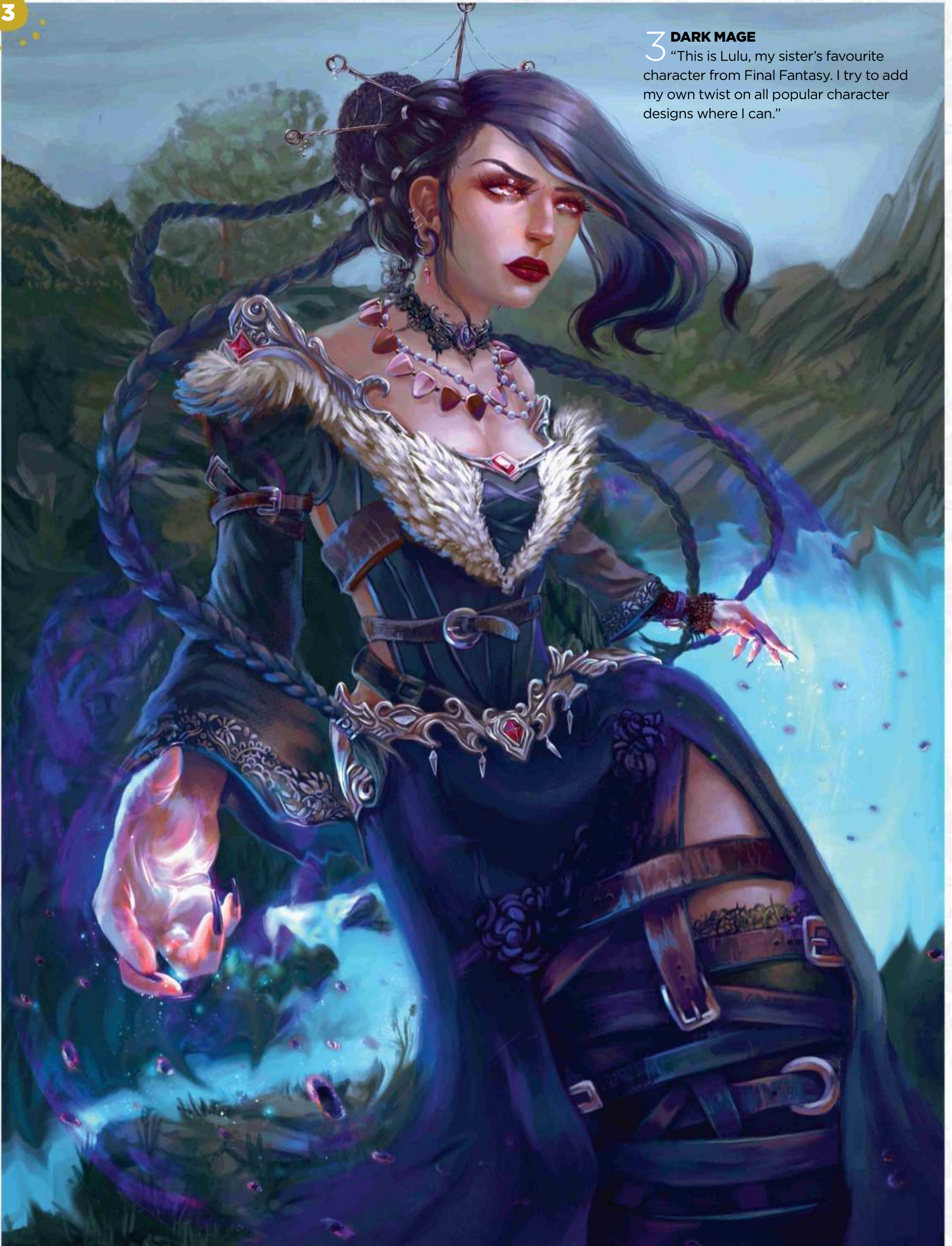




3

## 3 DARK MAGE

"This is Lulu, my sister's favourite character from Final Fantasy. I try to add my own twist on all popular character designs where I can."







## Jian Zhi

**LOCATION:** Singapore **MEDIA:** SketchUp, Photoshop, ZBrush **WEB:** [www.jianzhiart.com](http://www.jianzhiart.com)

Jian is an avid film watcher and video game enthusiast. These images are taken from the artist's final project at FZD School of Design, and explore a post-apocalyptic Hong Kong.

### 1 SLUM LORD

"The ruler of what's left of Hong Kong atop his throne. Filled with excess food and resources, the freezer room in which he lives illustrates his wealth in a world where resources are scarce."

### 2 TILTED

"Collapsed buildings, overgrown vegetation and exposed walls are a familiar sight in this worn-down city. This piece illustrates the slums born from the ruins of this once-great city."

### 3 FERRY TERMINAL

"The ferry terminal of the city. Even though the world as we know it has collapsed into chaos and disorder, there's still a need for the transportation of people and goods."

2







3





## Iwona Gradzka

**LOCATION:** Poland **MEDIA:** Rebelle, ArtRage, Krita **WEB:** [www.deviantart.com/afflation](http://www.deviantart.com/afflation)

Iwona is a Ph.D. student studying physics. Her passion for digital painting evolved from a love of traditional art, which has been an interest since childhood.

### 1 THE GRACE

"Here's one of my first studies of objects that are lit from the back. During the painting process I referred to a photo of myself in which I stood with my back to a window."



2



### 2 WILD SNAKES

"This is one example where I just played around with colours and brushes, not caring so much about the classical approach to composition, light and so on."

3



### 3 THE WORLDS DESTROYER

"Powerful, magical female characters from literature, video games or even anime films inspire me a lot. I painted this while looking at my photo and thinking about fighting my weaknesses."

### 4 INNER COEXISTENCE

"I don't believe in clear boundaries in many aspects of life. I like to combine weakness with strength, wet and dry, and so on. Here, delicate human skin turns into a shell and snakeskin."









## JéTaun Fitzpatrick

**LOCATION:** US **MEDIA:** Clip Studio Paint, Photoshop **WEB:** [www.deviantart.com/animatedjet](http://www.deviantart.com/animatedjet)

JéTaun – known as Jet – describes herself as “a storyteller, perpetual trier and an avid lover of everything”. She’s currently studying visual development at Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

### 1 ELUSIVE MEETING

“The first encounter between a brilliant field biologist and a savant neuroscientist. This was an especially fun scene to do because I was learning to create story through detail rather than rendering.”

### 2 A FERAL CHILD

“This class assignment: was an reimagining of the classic story of Tarzan. Who is really free?”







## Jon Dunham

**LOCATION:** England **MEDIA:** ZBrush, 3D-Coat, Marvelous Designer, KeyShot, Marmoset Toolbag **WEB:** [www.illustratjon.com](http://www.illustratjon.com)

Designer and illustrator Jon has a passion for space-themed art, learning about art, long Dungeon & Dragons sessions, and designing weird worlds. He describes himself as “a true friend of corgi worldwide”.

1



2



### 1 CORG-1

“I love corgis; they’re my favourite breed of dog. They’re like a large dog in a small body, and I wanted to paint something that expressed that.”

### 2 GRANDWIZARD SLOTH

“An offhand sketch that was the background painting for one of my art videos on YouTube, in which I talk about the mindset of being an artist.”



# 15 best online art schools

**Class acts** Art students no longer have to go through the expensive process of spending years at university. **Tom May** outlines the best sources of art education you can access from your own home



INSTRUCTOR: CHRIS BROCK



## Computer Graphics Master Academy

[www.cgmasteracademy.com](http://www.cgmasteracademy.com) Cost: from \$599 to \$998 per course

Computer Graphics Master Academy is focused on getting its students work in the animation, games and VFX industries, and to this end offers 100 courses, from drawing basics to environment design. These are taught by over 90 pros, including Mélanie Delon, Patrick J Jones, Armand Serrano and Aaron Limonick, who provide live feedback and one-to-one mentoring in a virtual classroom.





## PICTURE THE SCENE

Concept artist Stephan Martinière was tasked with visualising the look of Alpha, a film set in pre-historic Europe. His answer was to think like a photographer. **Page 30**



## MAKING IT LOOK EASEL

Some artists like to work on more than one painting at a time. Thanks to his unique robotic easel, Howard Lyon can tackle 16 canvases at once! **Page 32**



## WE WANT YOUR VIEWS!

Our regular Letters page is your chance to tell us what we're doing right, or if we're missing a trick with our coverage of digital and traditional art. **Page 37**



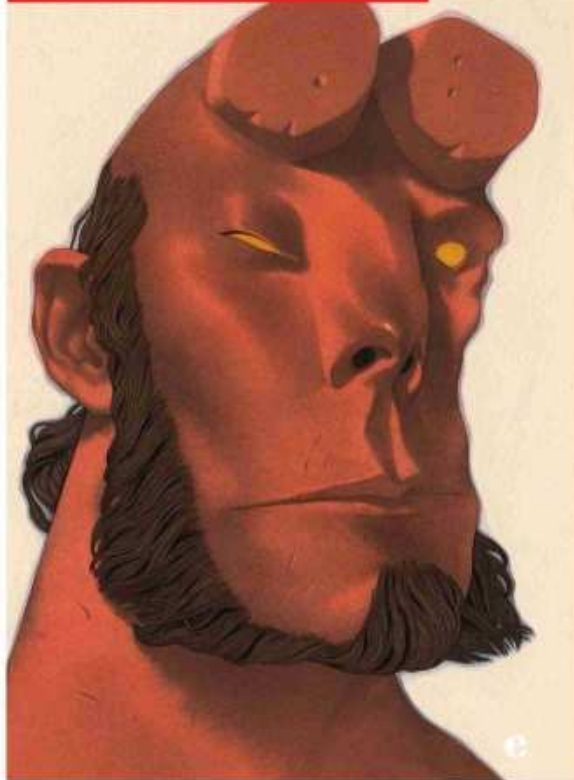
CGMA has over 90 active industry-experienced mentors teaching every term, who mostly hail from major art studios.

With over 900 students worldwide, CGMA provides a vibrant network for discussion and career development through its virtual classroom community.

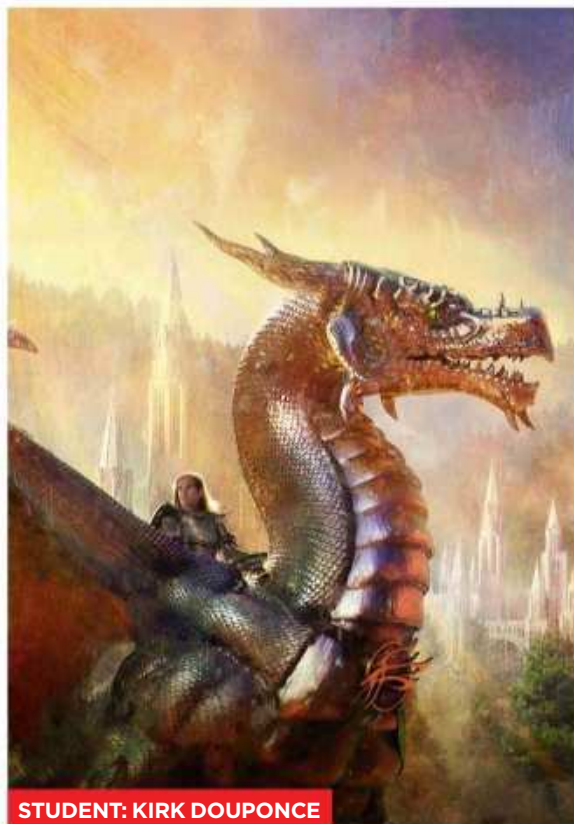


**INSTRUCTOR: MICHAL KUS**

**INSTRUCTOR: EDWARD KINSELLA III**



Visual Arts Passage enables industry-leading pros to mentor budding artists from anywhere in the world.



**STUDENT: KIRK DOUPONCE**

## Visual Arts Passage

[www.visualartspassage.com](http://www.visualartspassage.com)

**Cost: from \$799 to \$1,799 per course**

Visual Arts Passage is a mentorship programme for students pursuing a career in the art industry. Live, interactive classes are small and are taught by working professionals, including George Pratt, Jon Foster and Michael Bierek. It offers a foundations course, and lessons in entertainment and game art, and illustration. Applicants qualify for a one-on-one portfolio review. For more details see the Industry Insight box (right). ➡➡

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT

### JOHN ENGLISH

*Visual Arts Passage's co-founder discusses online mentorship*

#### Can you tell us about the relationship between the Visual Arts Passage and The Illustration Academy?

The Illustration Academy is a series of immersive in-person workshops, taught by working illustrators. Students travel to the attend the Academy from all over the world. With that in mind, we created an online program of equal calibre, that was accessible to art students everywhere.

#### What do the courses involve?

Students receive in-depth, one-on-one guidance from experienced artists in small classes. All lessons are delivered live and are fully interactive. Every student has a front row seat.

#### What's the course structure?

Visual Arts Passage places art students on a track of challenging courses taught by working artists. This bridges the gap between the art student and the professional. We guide students from building foundational skills, all the way to crafting an industry-ready portfolio. It's a map to the industry, paired with training by world-class professionals.

#### Can you get a course taster?

We host free monthly online lectures featuring world-renowned artists. Students who apply to Visual Arts Passage gain access to our library of free lectures and demos. I also invite all of our applicants to schedule a free one-on-one online portfolio review with me.



*John is an award-winning painter and illustrator whose work has appeared in magazines and book covers.*

<https://ifxm.ag/john-english>



## CG Spectrum

[www.cgspectrum.edu.au](http://www.cgspectrum.edu.au)

**Cost: From \$2,895 (group class);  
from \$3,795 (one-to-one class)**

CG Spectrum offers courses in animation, 3D modelling, concept art, visual effects, compositing and game design that help students get the training they need for industry life. Live lessons take place as either small group classes or one-on-one mentoring, and the pro mentors – who include Craig Elliott and Jake Collinge – stay connected with students throughout each week of their course.

**STUDENT: KATINKA THORONDOR**



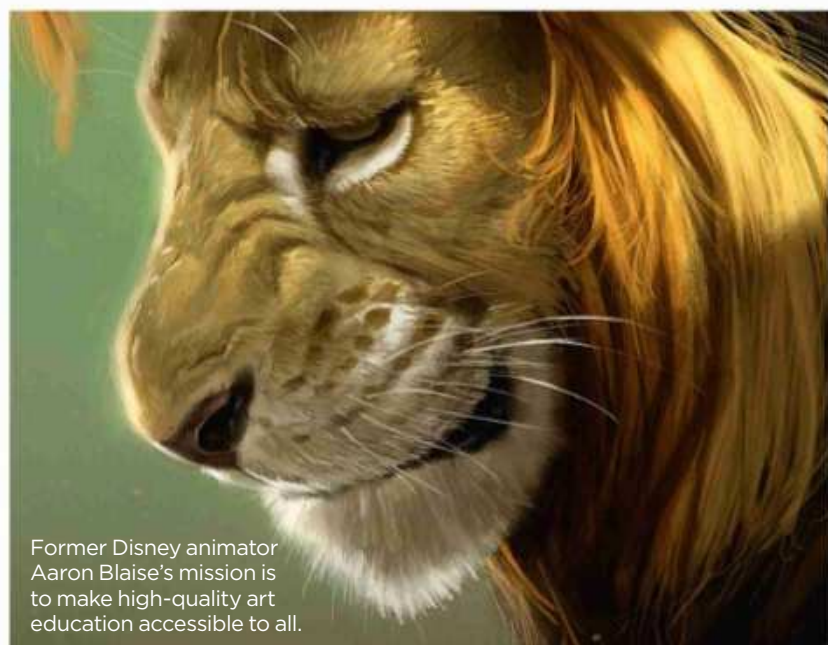
CG Spectrum helps students find employment through network nurturing and an emphasis on folio and demo-reel building.



**STUDENT: ESTEBAN ARIZA**



**INSTRUCTOR: AARON BLAISE**



Former Disney animator Aaron Blaise's mission is to make high-quality art education accessible to all.



## Art of Aaron Blaise

[www.creatureartteacher.com](http://www.creatureartteacher.com)

**Cost: \$20/month, \$199/year  
or pay for each course purchased**

The Art of Aaron Blaise, which was launched by the former Disney animator and director, has over 200 hours of tutorials, lessons and courses on topics such as animation, digital painting, storyboarding and animal drawing. Courses are available as affordable, à la carte downloads or as part of an all-you-can-eat subscription. The site also has hundreds of custom Photoshop brushes. ➡➡



**NOW AVAILABLE**

## THE ART OF

## 200+ Hours of Video

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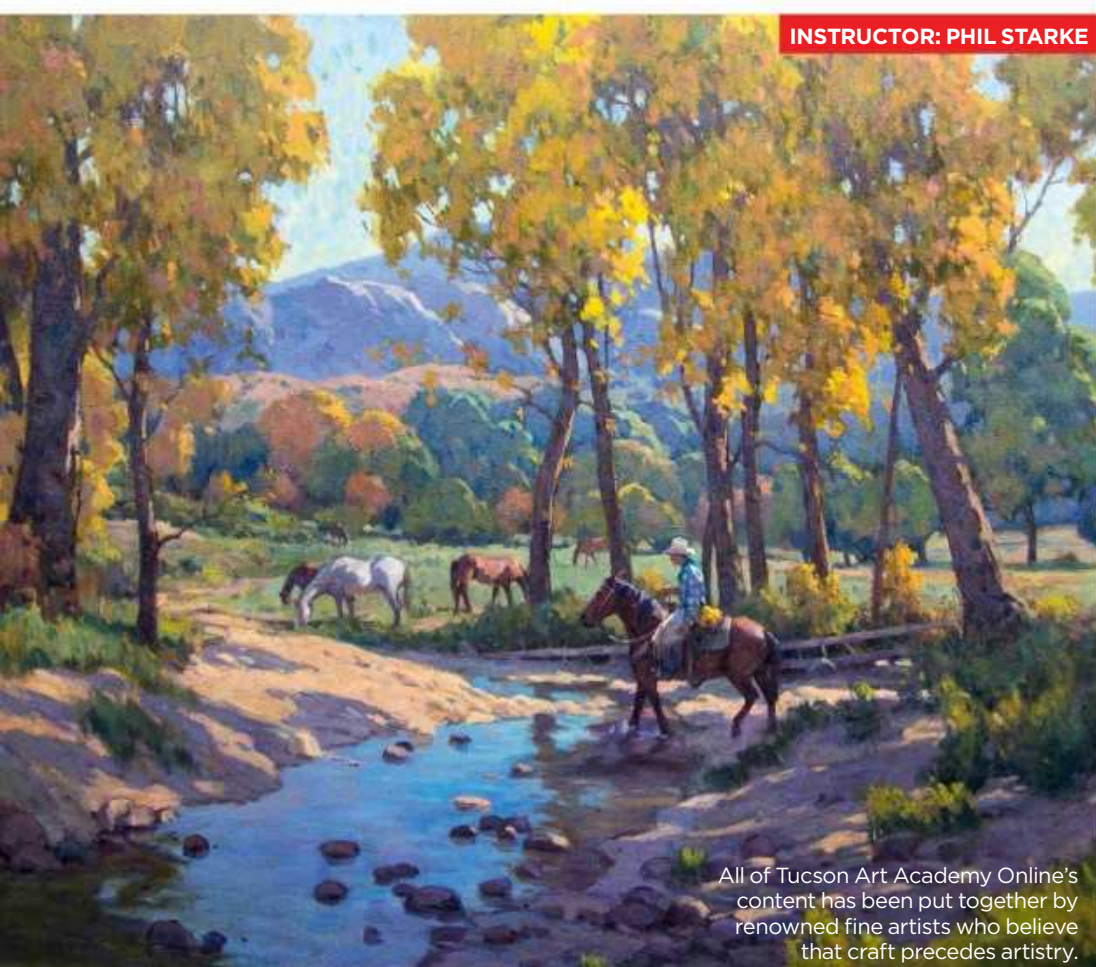


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**[www.CreatureArtTeacher.com](http://www.CreatureArtTeacher.com)**





**INSTRUCTOR: PHIL STARKE**

All of Tucson Art Academy Online's content has been put together by renowned fine artists who believe that craft precedes artistry.

## Tucson Art Academy Online

[www.tucsonartacademyonline.com](http://www.tucsonartacademyonline.com)

**Cost: \$395 (Self-Study option); \$595 (Online Mentoring option)**

Tucson Art Academy Online offers pre-recorded video lessons on pastel, oils, acrylic and watercolour from the likes of established traditional artists Laura Robb, Ken Auster and Sandy Scott, which you can access for 365 days. With Self-Study, that's all you get; if you choose the Online Mentoring option, you can ask the tutor questions.

## Ctrl+Paint

[www.ctrlpaint.com](http://www.ctrlpaint.com)

**Cost: Free; premium videos from \$10**

Many free online courses are of dubious quality. Not so these pre-recorded videos from founder Matt Kohr, which are organised like a school curriculum. Ctrl+Paint also offers premium video lessons that take you through basic foundation art skills.



Each bite-sized video on Ctrl+Paint covers a different concept in manageable increments.

**INSTRUCTOR: MATT KOHR**



**INSTRUCTOR: MATT KOHR**

With over 50 years of teaching, Glenn Vilppu's focus is on bringing logic and practical application to his online classes.



**INSTRUCTOR: GLENN VILPPU**



## Vilppu Academy

[www.vilppuacademy.com](http://www.vilppuacademy.com)

**Cost: from \$500 to \$900**

Vilppu Academy offers an online version of the figure drawing, anatomy, sketching and composition lessons taught by veteran educator Glenn Vilppu in studios and universities around the world. You watch pre-recorded video lectures and are set one-week tasks, for which you get feedback from Glenn. Students also get to critique each others' work. ➡➡





ACADEMY

ONLINE ACADEMY FOR DRAWING

VILPPUACADEMY.COM

Now enrolling  
for January 2019



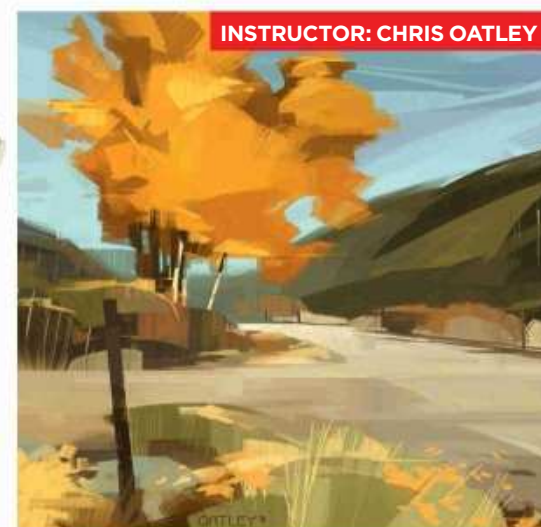


## The Oatley Academy

[www.oatleyacademy.com](http://www.oatleyacademy.com)

**Cost:** Prices vary according to guest mentor

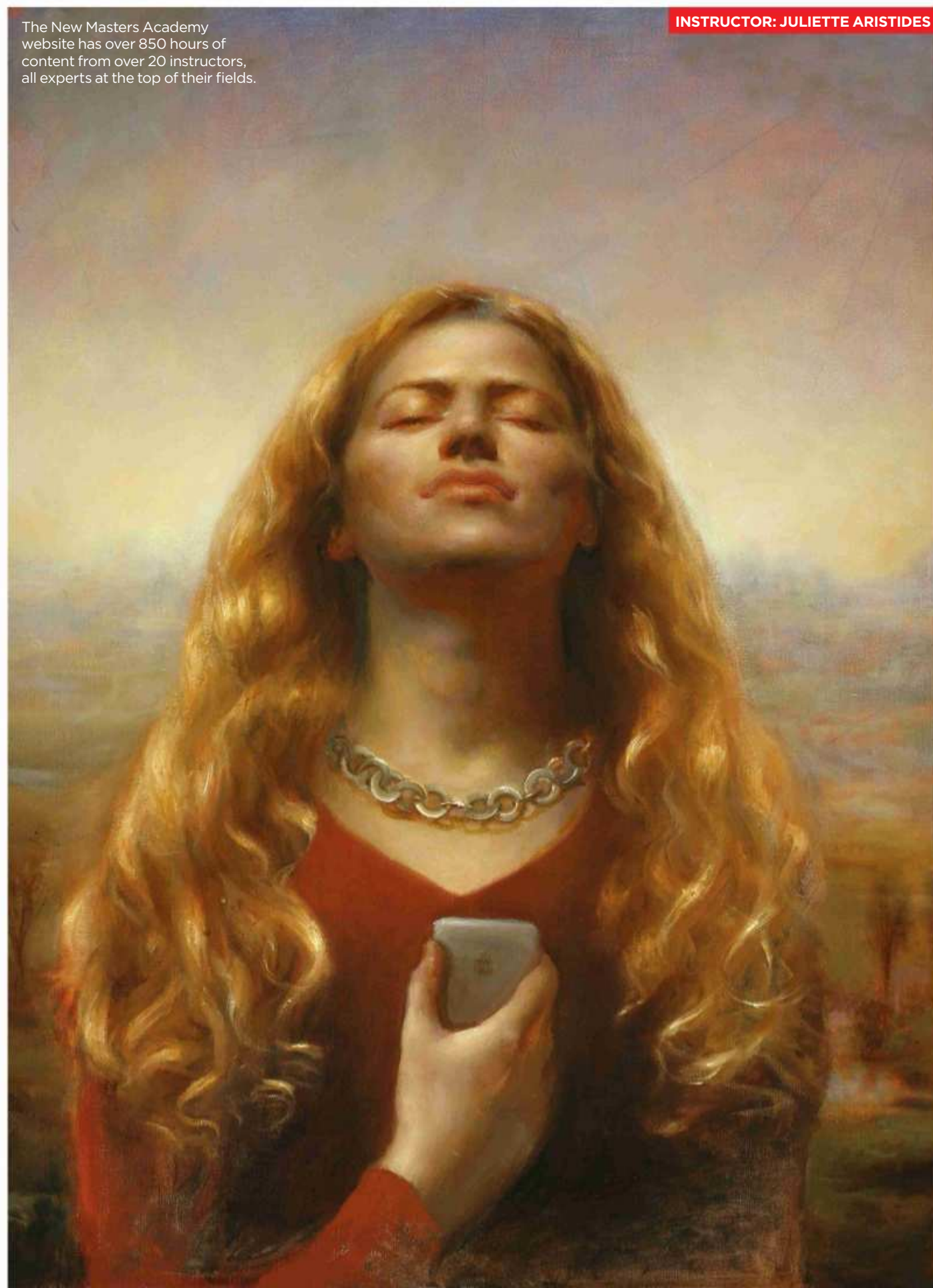
Founded by former Disney artist Chris Oatley, The Oatley Academy of Visual Storytelling specialises in real-time mentorships with a host of industry professionals that include Paul Scott Canavan, Brett Bean, Shaun Bryant and Jenn Ely. Many graduates have gone on to become animation artists or illustrators, working for the likes of Disney, Marvel Animation and Cartoon Network. Self-guided courses covering topics such as visual storytelling are also available – these cost \$19/month or \$209/year.



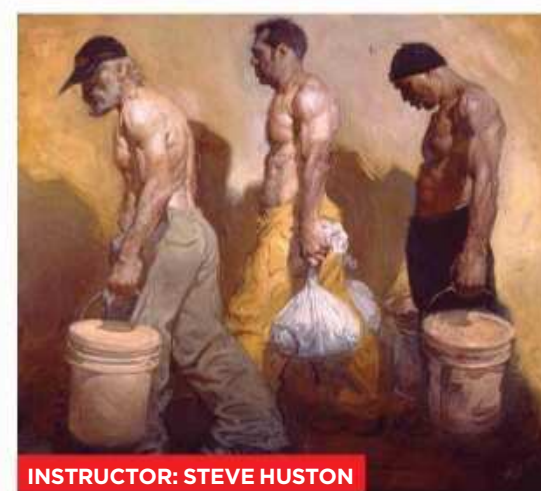
INSTRUCTOR: CHRIS OATLEY

The New Masters Academy website has over 850 hours of content from over 20 instructors, all experts at the top of their fields.

INSTRUCTOR: JULIETTE ARISTIDES



INSTRUCTOR: STEVE HUSTON



INSTRUCTOR: STEVE HUSTON

## New Masters Academy

[www.nma.art](http://www.nma.art)

**Cost:** \$35 per month (Standard);  
\$44 per month (Premium)

The New Masters Academy offers online courses for fine artists. Tutors include Steve Huston, Charles Hu and Kamille Corry. The Standard Netflix-style subscription gives you over 850 hours of pre-recorded video lectures; the Premium level allows access to an online 3D reference library and 20,000+ reference images.



STUDENT: OMAR TAHER

Gnomon provides online courses for artists who are seeking training direct from Hollywood, coupled with the convenience of learning from home.

STUDENT: MICHELLE JUNG



STUDENT: YANNI ROUSSOS



## Gnomon

[www.gnomon.edu](http://www.gnomon.edu)

**Cost: from \$993 to \$1,323**

Gnomon is known as the MIT of visual effects, and its online courses provide the same academic rigour as its campus-based ones. Live classes by industry pros such as Ron Lemen and Dave Pasciuto take place once a week for 10 weeks and are available four terms per year. Note that online courses are only open to artists living in California or outside the US. ➡➡



## Learn Squared

[www.learnsquared.com](http://www.learnsquared.com)

**Cost: from \$249 to \$500 per course**

Covering topics like matte painting and creature design, Learn Squared offers something a little different: pre-recorded videos in which one top industry artist – Aaron Limonick or Maciej Kuciara, say – instructs another in a discipline they're unfamiliar with. Depending on the payment level, you also get access to videos, project files and mentorship from tutors.

**INSTRUCTOR: ALEX FIGINI**



Learn Squared offers a new form of online art education, in which industry-leading artists teach skills to each other.



**INSTRUCTOR: JINGNA ZHANG**

Stan Prokopenko's premium courses supplement his free YouTube videos.



**INSTRUCTOR: STAN PROKOPENKO**



## Proko

[www.proko.com](http://www.proko.com)

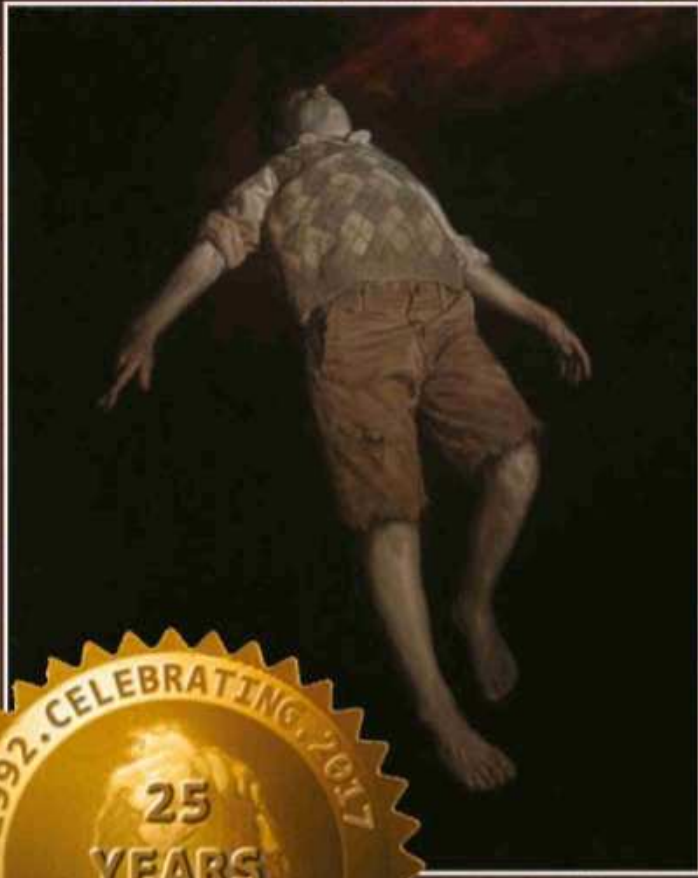
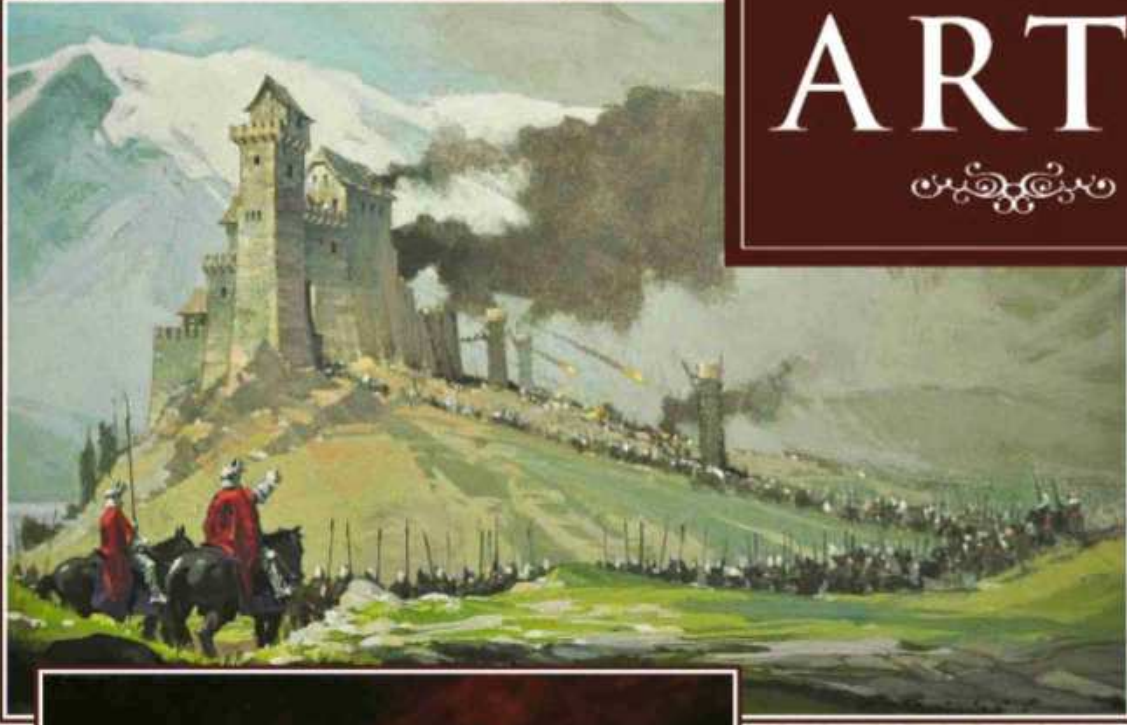
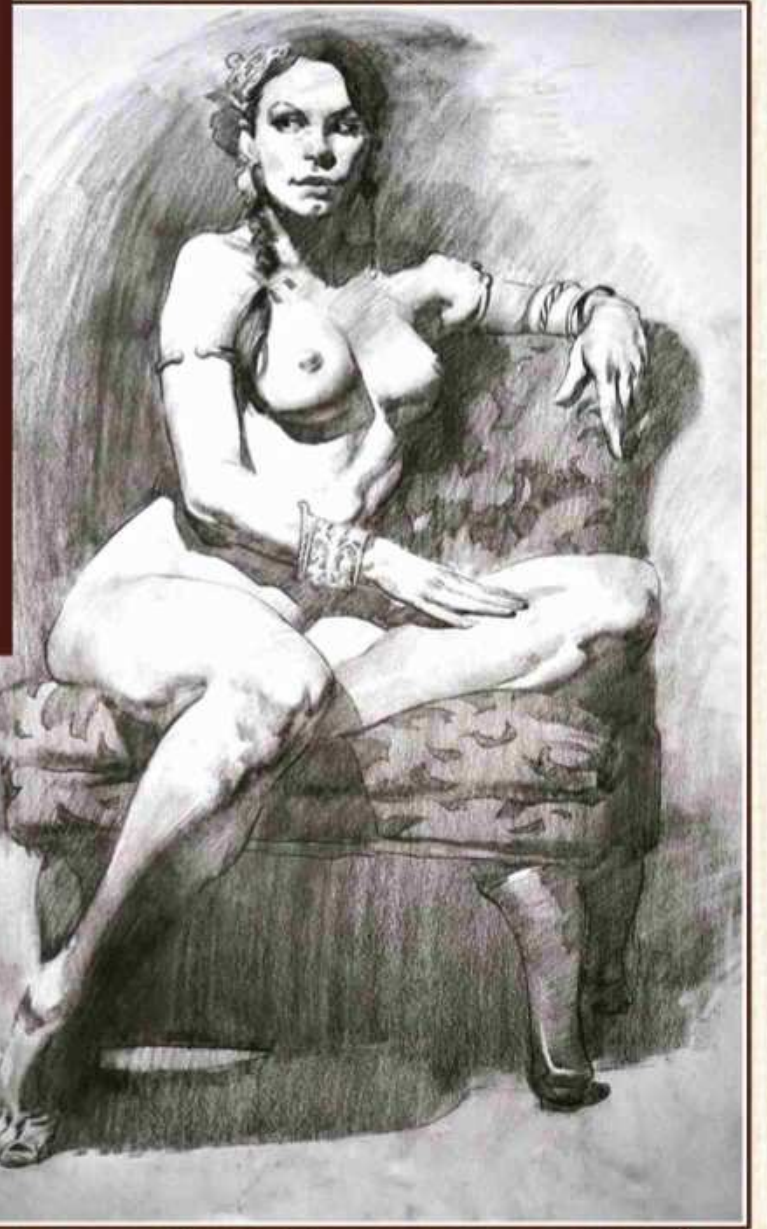
**Cost: from \$59 to \$225 per course**

California-based artist Stan Prokopenko offers both free video lessons on YouTube and paid-for courses in anatomy, figure drawing, portrait drawing and caricature via his website. The latter consist of pre-recorded video lessons, assignment demos and examples, eBooks, critique videos and 3D models. He also offers personal critiques to premium members via email. ➡➡





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## Watts Atelier of the Arts

[www.wattsatelier.com](http://www.wattsatelier.com)

**Cost: from \$99 to \$499 per month**

Since 2013, the Watts Atelier college has made its art courses available online. This involves pre-recorded video lessons and PDF workbooks. For \$299 per month you'll also get a weekly critique by a Watts trained pro artist, and for \$499 per month, two 30-minute live video-coaching sessions and a weekly critique by one of the Watts Atelier instructors, which include Erik M Gist and Lucas Graciano.



STUDENT: CHRIS PARIANO

INSTRUCTOR: JEFFREY WATTS



Watt's online programme provides you with structured learning that will help you establish a strong foundation in the arts.

STUDENT: PAVEL SOKOV



## Schoolism

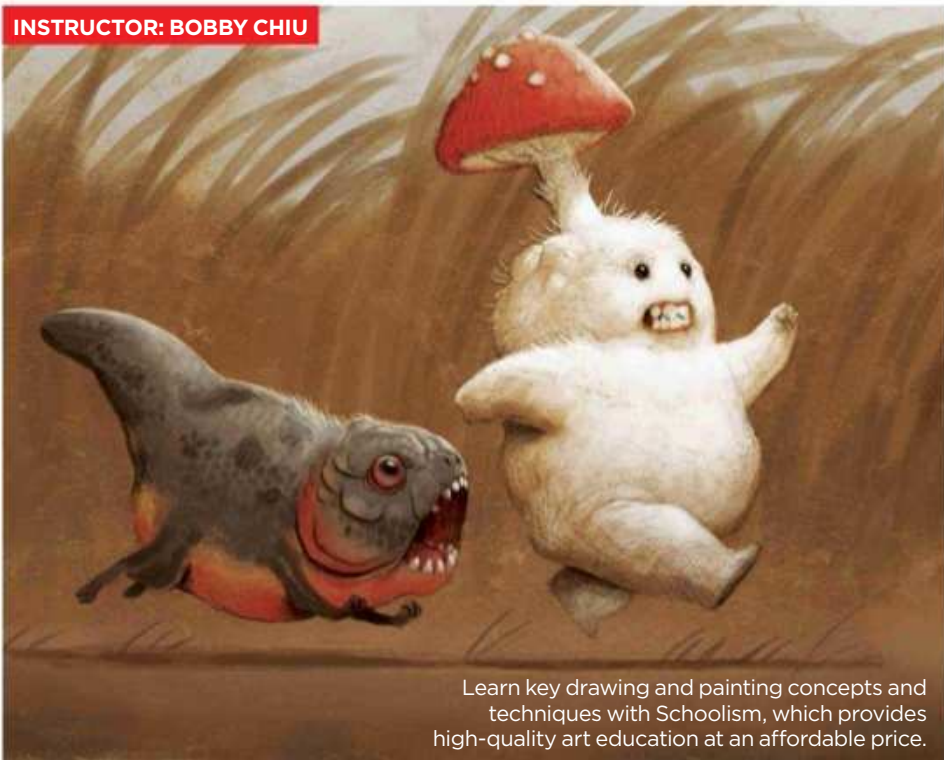
[www.schoolism.com](http://www.schoolism.com)

**Cost: \$30 a month or \$299 a year (annual subscription); from \$698 a year (personalised video feedback)**

Teaching traditional drawing, painting and design, Schoolism is best known for its guest instructors such as Craig Mullins, Terry Whitlatch and founder Bobby Chiu. A yearly subscription gives you access to pre-recorded video tutorials, plus a limited number of students can pay extra to get their work video-critiqued by tutors.



INSTRUCTOR: BOBBY CHIU



Learn key drawing and painting concepts and techniques with Schoolism, which provides high-quality art education at an affordable price.

INSTRUCTOR: DONATO GIANCOLA



SmART School invites working professionals to share their knowledge online, in an environment where dialogue is the norm.

## SmART School

[www.smarterartschool.com](http://www.smarterartschool.com)

**Cost: \$2,500 per course**

Founded by Rebecca Guay, SmART School offers live classes in figure drawing for small groups. These interactive online lessons are given by industry pro artists such as Donato Giancola and Terese Nielsen, as well as editors, directors, agents and gallery owners, who use GoToMeeting to provide assignment critiques, hands-on draw-overs in Photoshop, and Q&As with every student.



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Based on conversations he had with director Albert Hughes, Stephan Martinière helped visualise key scenes from Alpha.

## Art captures a film's soul

**Pre-vis wiz** Digital art pioneer Stephan Martinière explains how his love of photography helped him visualise key moments of the new film Alpha – before it had even been started



**It's common that concept artists start work at the early stages of filmmaking, but French artist **Stephan Martinière's****

**work on recently released film Alpha was pre-pre-production.**

"Usually, when I'm brought on a film it's to create concepts: ideas for designs of vehicles, environments or costumes," he says, "yet occasionally I'm asked to capture the aesthetic of a film." This was the case when film

director Albert Hughes (Dead Presidents, From Hell, The Book of Eli) got in touch with Stephan and tasked him with creating 10 images that would help the director pitch the film.

The film, released this August, is a prehistoric tale of a boy, who while trying to reunite with his lost tribe, befriends a wolf. Stephan – who has experience on films such as I, Robot, Guardians of the Galaxy and Ready Player One – relished the prospect of working at this stage of the production.

The dramatic skies over Santa Fe, New Mexico provided Stephan with plenty of inspiration for the project.

"Working this early in movie development is very pleasant," he says. "You're one-on-one with the director, with very in-depth communication regarding the project. And this project's aim was specific, in that the objective was to create photographic images that captured pivotal moments in the film, like the buffalo hunt at the beginning, or when the main character is saved by his wolf companion."

Stephan had to think much more like a cinematographer or photographer than a concept artist. "The focus was on creating iconic visuals of the prehistoric landscape by playing with lighting, colours and mood," he says.

The artist didn't have to search far to become inspired for the assignment: "Because the aim was to create

**“The focus was on creating iconic visuals of the prehistoric landscape...”**







Alpha charts the companionship that develops between a boy and a wolf, set in prehistoric Europe.

Stephan produced 10 pieces of art that enabled the director to pitch successfully for the film's funding.



something photorealistic, I took inspiration from a lot of photography, including my own."

For this project Stephan made particular use of the dramatic lighting of where he lives: Santa Fe, New Mexico. "I'm perpetually in awe of the sunsets here... I've gotten into taking a lot of photos of the skies, with the vast landscapes and mountains. The colours of the skies here inspired much of how I approached painting the skies for the film."

You can see more of Stephan's film work here: [www.martinieri.com/film](http://www.martinieri.com/film).



By depicting the same location at different times of the year, Stephan helped to convey the scale and ambition of the film.





## Howard Lyon

**Lyon's den** This illustrator's custom-designed studio features a robotic easel that's capable of holding up to 16 paintings at a time!

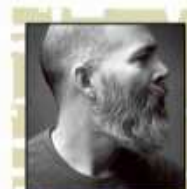


This is my shipping station. When orders come in for prints or paintings I can package them up here.

I like to have several paintings on the go at the same time and also use my easel space to enable paintings to dry or wait for varnishing.



I like to display my reference using a 12.9-inch iPad Pro. A gooseneck floor stand enables me get it in the perfect position for my reference.



**I was lucky enough to build my studio with some specific features in mind. I wanted enough space to be able to work on several projects at once, teach workshops and host other artists. I also wanted the consistency of north light and space that was comfortable. After all, I spend most of my waking hours in my studio! I also needed space to display work ready to ship, or for clients who stop by the studio.**

Each week I have a portrait night, when up to 12 other artists bring their supplies and we paint together. My wife, Shari, and niece are also artists and share the studio space with me.

It's easy for artists to become hermits, so I wanted a space that my family and friends could spend time with me. It isn't unusual for my kids to do their homework, play games or just hang out in the studio while I work. ➡➡



The Return of Flora is an allegory about the abandonment and of beauty in high art through the 10th century, but optimism about its return. Flora, the Roman goddess of flowers, is up at dawn, preparing for the celebration ahead.



# Artist news, software & events

The panel behind my head with the holes in it will hold up to a 16x20-inch panel and rotate 360 degrees. It's very handy for paintings with straight lines!

Just over my shoulder is a small painting by my mentor, Don Seegmiller. There's nothing like having original works on show. They have an impact on my mind that prints don't.



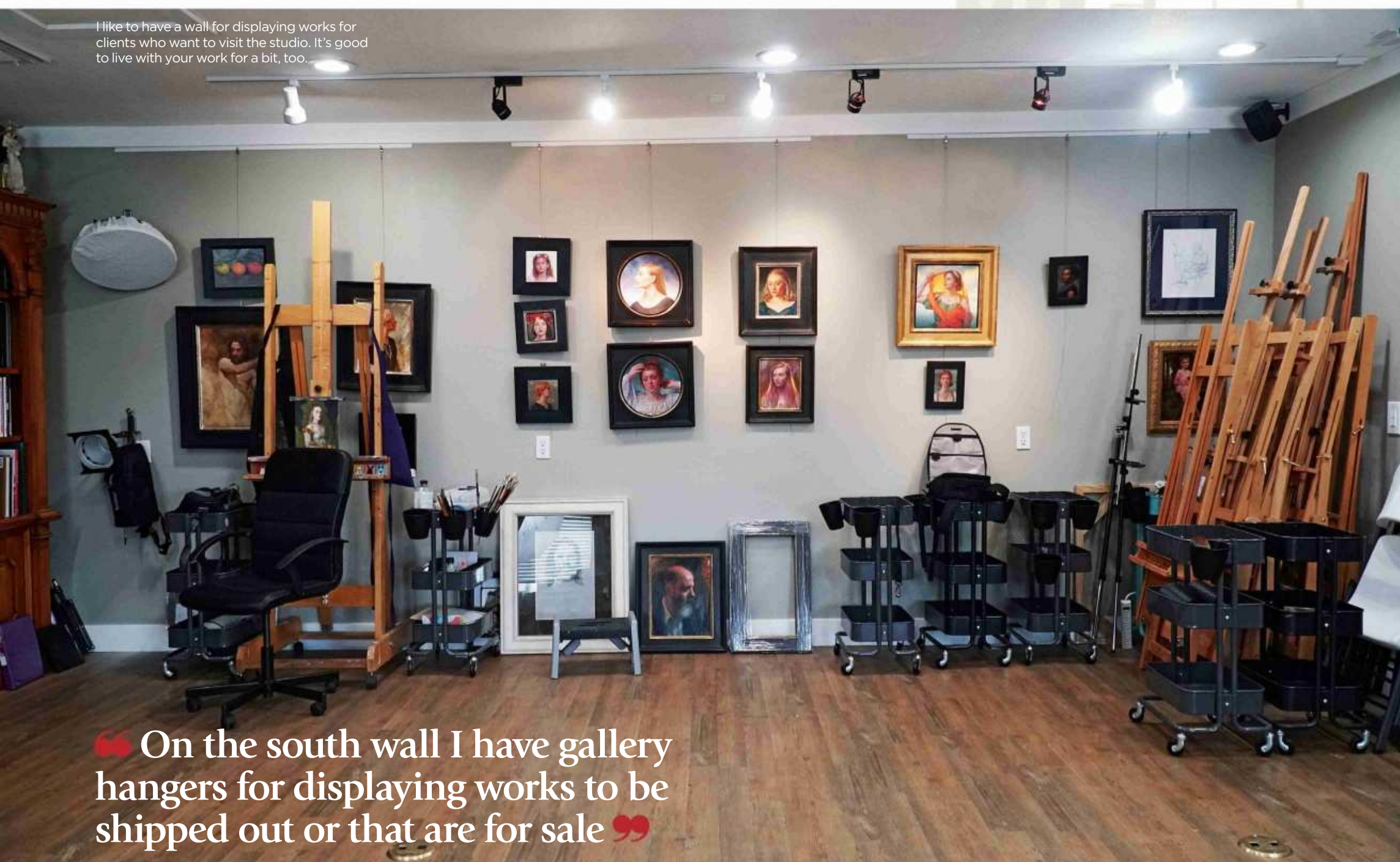
I prefer a handheld palette and clip a sheet of paper towels to it to wipe my brushes on while painting. This keeps paint off my hands.

The two small boxes you see against the wall are filled with grey metal bars. They serve as the counterweight for my easel, ensuring that it's well balanced.

The steel trash can on the floor is for paint rags. It's important to keep your oil rags covered, both for air quality and to reduce the chance of fire.



I like to have a wall for displaying works for clients who want to visit the studio. It's good to live with your work for a bit, too.



“On the south wall I have gallery hangers for displaying works to be shipped out or that are for sale”

➡ I've run speaker wire to the corners of the studio so that I can have music fill the entire space. It's one of my favourite and most important features of my workspace.

My easel is on the east wall. It's the studio's centrepiece and where I spend the most time working. I created a rough design, and then my father used this to make a new type of easel that can lift and hold either a 20-foot wide canvas or 16 smaller works at once. It's powered by an electric motor and controlled by a remote. Paintings can move side to side and up and down.

## WORLDLY TREASURES

I have a large, beautiful book case for my favourite art books and some treasures from around the world. On the south wall I have gallery hangers for displaying works to be shipped out or that are for sale, and space to store extra easels and equipment.

The north wall has a six-foot window that lets in a substantial light and an alcove/entrance that serves as the



Every spring I find myself wanting to paint flowers in my compositions, to reflect the changing of the seasons.



I'll often build models for my paintings. In this case, a first-century wooden boat. This enables me to shoot excellent reference of something that would otherwise be extremely hard to get hold of.

working space for Shari. The west wall is the digital space where I do all my computer work.

My favourite spot in the studio is the space in front of the window where you can usually find my dog, Max, sleeping or looking out the window. I like to sit in the chairs there and read or sketch, and view the mountains and clouds outside.

*Howard's been an art director, concept artist and illustrator. See more of his fantasy and sci-fi art at [www.howardlyon.com](http://www.howardlyon.com).*



# Artist news, software & events



This represents the potential within all of us to reach for something greater. Ella, the girl in the painting, stands firmly on the ground but is framed by the heavens. The drapery around her forms an infinite loop.



I love books! In case of a fire, my wife will get the family out while I carry my books to safety. Bookshelves are also a good place for treasures and bones.



This is my favourite place in the studio when I'm not painting. My dog, Max, has taken over one chair, but he kindly lets me use the other one.



I also have a digital space to work. Most of my colour comps are done digitally and I'll occasionally paint digitally for an illustration.







### ESSENTIAL ART RESOURCES

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# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on [claire@imaginefx.com](mailto:claire@imaginefx.com) or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England



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### What on earth do you mean?

I enjoy the informative articles that appear in ImagineFX. However, I do struggle with some of the terminology used in the text. "Render", I assume, implies colouring in something, while "values" crops up quite a bit and I wonder in what context? "Leverage in the details" is another that makes me question what the writer is getting at. My confusion is probably due to my advanced years.

The main reason I'm writing is that I've looked through the past two issues to find a link to ImagineFX's site so that I can upload my first digital painting to your gallery. I must be missing it somehow – can you help?

**John Ansell, via email**



We're unable to host reader John's artwork online, but we can certainly show it off in the magazine!

**Claire replies** First off John, sadly there's no longer an ImagineFX online gallery to upload your art, so I can't help you there. And I'm sorry to confuse you about the terms that appear in some of our workshops – I'll keep a closer eye on what artists are saying. Values relates to the lightness and darkness of a colour. The word render can be used to explain different things, but for our artists it mostly means they're working in more detail into an image, be it the colour, shading, background and so forth. Leverage in the details sounds like we should have changed it to something else...

### Starting out in digital

I want to start by saying that I love ImagineFX. The magazine is such a source of inspiration. I like seeing all the different style of imagery and



**DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?**

Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit <http://ifxm.ag/166-ifx> for details.



In a previous edition Donglu Yu painted a fantasy forest – there are more environment workshops in the pipeline.

exploring the work of new artists. I especially love poring over the regular Sketchbook section.

I'm writing to you to ask for two things to appear in future issues. So far I've worked predominantly with traditional media. I'd really like to get into digital art because I'm so inspired by what I see in your magazine, but I'm finding it hard to know where to start.

I wonder that perhaps in a future issue you could take the time to produce an article that focuses on which digital art resources would be good for an absolute beginner.

Furthermore, I find landscapes and nature very difficult to draw and paint because they're so chaotic. I would love an issue that focuses on how to simplify nature so that it looks realistic when painted. I find especially vegetation (for example, piles of leaves, grass, mountains seen from afar that are covered with trees) very difficult to portray, especially in black and white because the colour isn't there to help separate them out.

**Ioanna Papadopoulou, via email**

**Claire replies** Hello Ioanna, we have previously featured articles on the various digital art software to try if you're a beginner. The answer can be so varied: it can depend on what hardware you have, your budget, or even what you want the software to help you achieve.

From time to time we also provide a series of Core Skill articles, which takes a piece of software and over the course of a number of issues takes a tool or technique and explains how it works. And yes to environment workshops – I have a few of these planned in for later editions. Stay tuned.



New works that have grabbed our attention



**Debono Art**  
[@debonoart](https://www.instagram.com/debonoart)



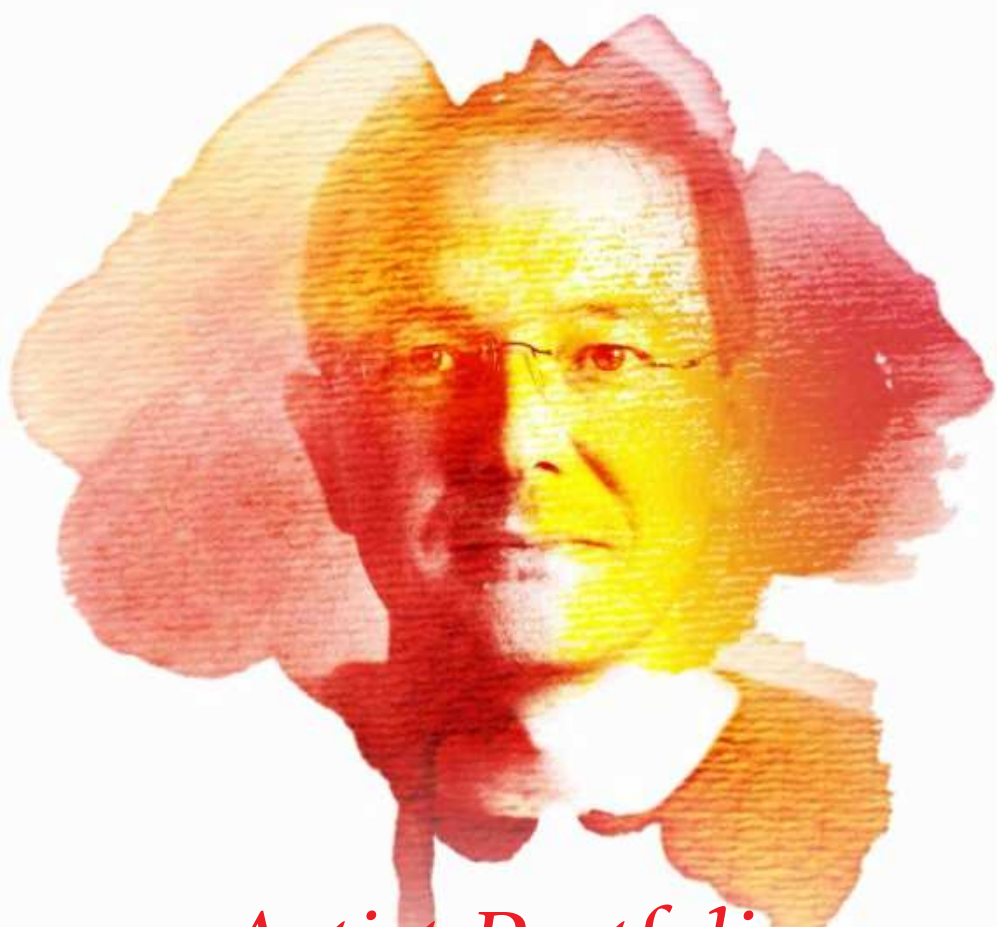
**Arista Art**  
[@aristajem](https://twitter.com/aristajem)



**Andy the illustrator**  
[@andy\\_the\\_illustrator](https://www.instagram.com/andy_the_illustrator)

If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!





## Artist Portfolio **SHAUN TAN**

**Dom Carter** discovers how the Australian picture book artist and author goes about telling uniquely strange stories...

**S**haun Tan feels like he's reached a point in his career where he finally knows what he's doing. Kind of. The picture book artist and writer, who grew up in the fairly isolated suburbs of Perth, Western Australia, has gone on to win some of the biggest and richest literary prizes, but his success almost sounds like it's taken him by surprise. "I didn't have any particular ambition," says Shaun about starting out. "Children's publishing wasn't really an area I necessarily had any vested interest in."

### Artist **PROFILE**

**Shaun Tan**

**LOCATION:** Australia

**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Francis Bacon, Hieronymus Bosch, Raymond Briggs, Edward Gorey, René Magritte and Ralph Steadman

**MEDIA USED:** Oil, acrylic, gouache, pencil, charcoal, collage and sculpture

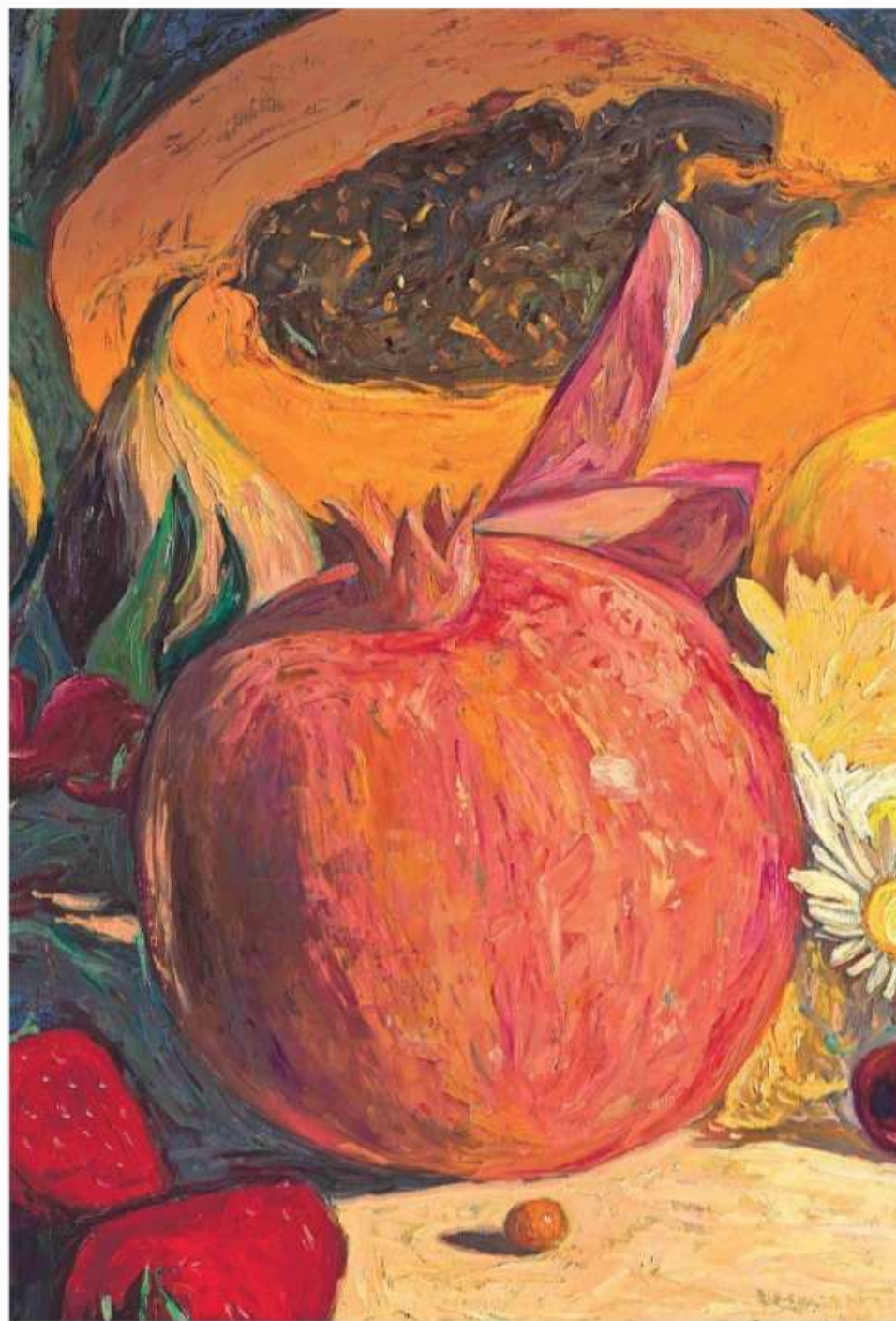
**WEB:** [www.shauntan.net](http://www.shauntan.net)

Luckily for readers, Shaun grew to enjoy the playful, subversive opportunities offered by picture books, and this year sees the release of two new titles: *Cicada*, and *Tales From Inner City*. His previous books have landed him Hugo Awards, the only film he's ever worked on has scooped an Oscar, and his career as a whole has seen him honoured with the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2011. Not that he's let any of this go to his head.

"I'm like a real artistic downer," Shaun jokes, "because I often don't feel that motivated to draw. It just feels like a lot of work! When I get an idea, like when I was a kid, I want to see what it looks like, and the only way I can do that is by drawing. For me, drawing is like a means to an end."

### **TALES FROM AUSTRALIA**

Speaking of his childhood, the boy known as 'the good drawer' started turning his interest in science fiction and horror into a career as a teenage

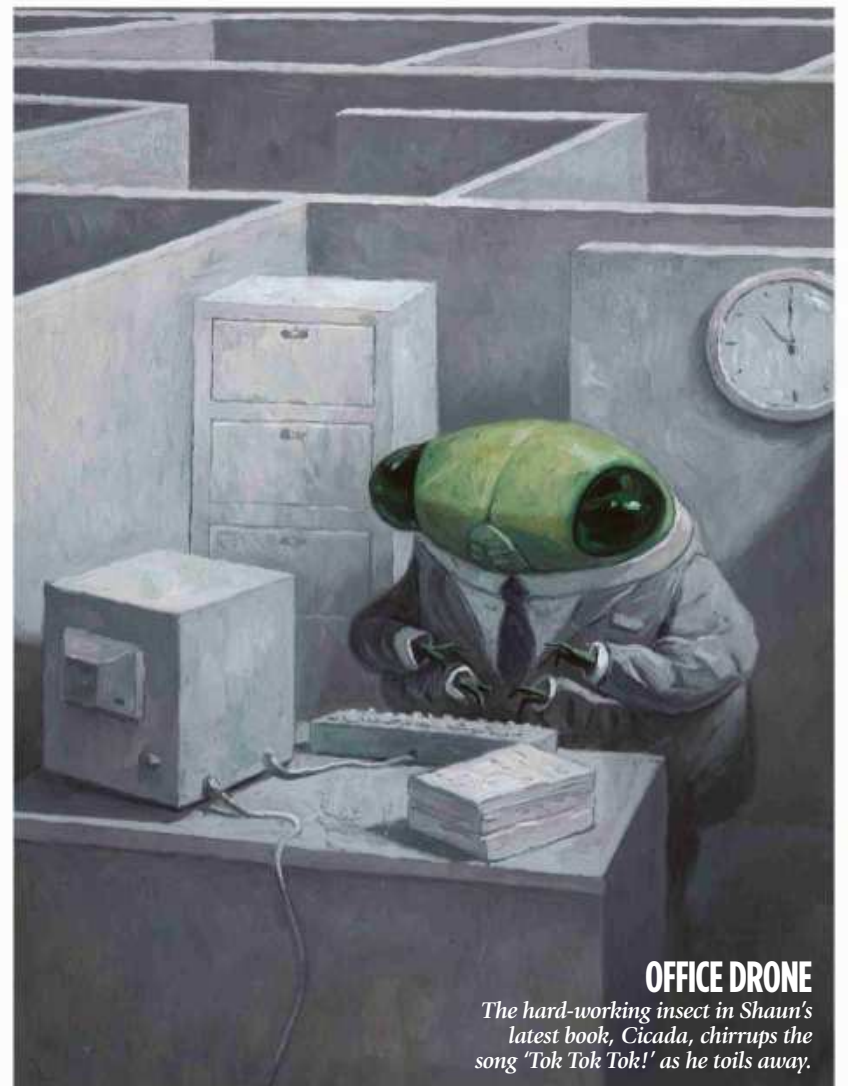






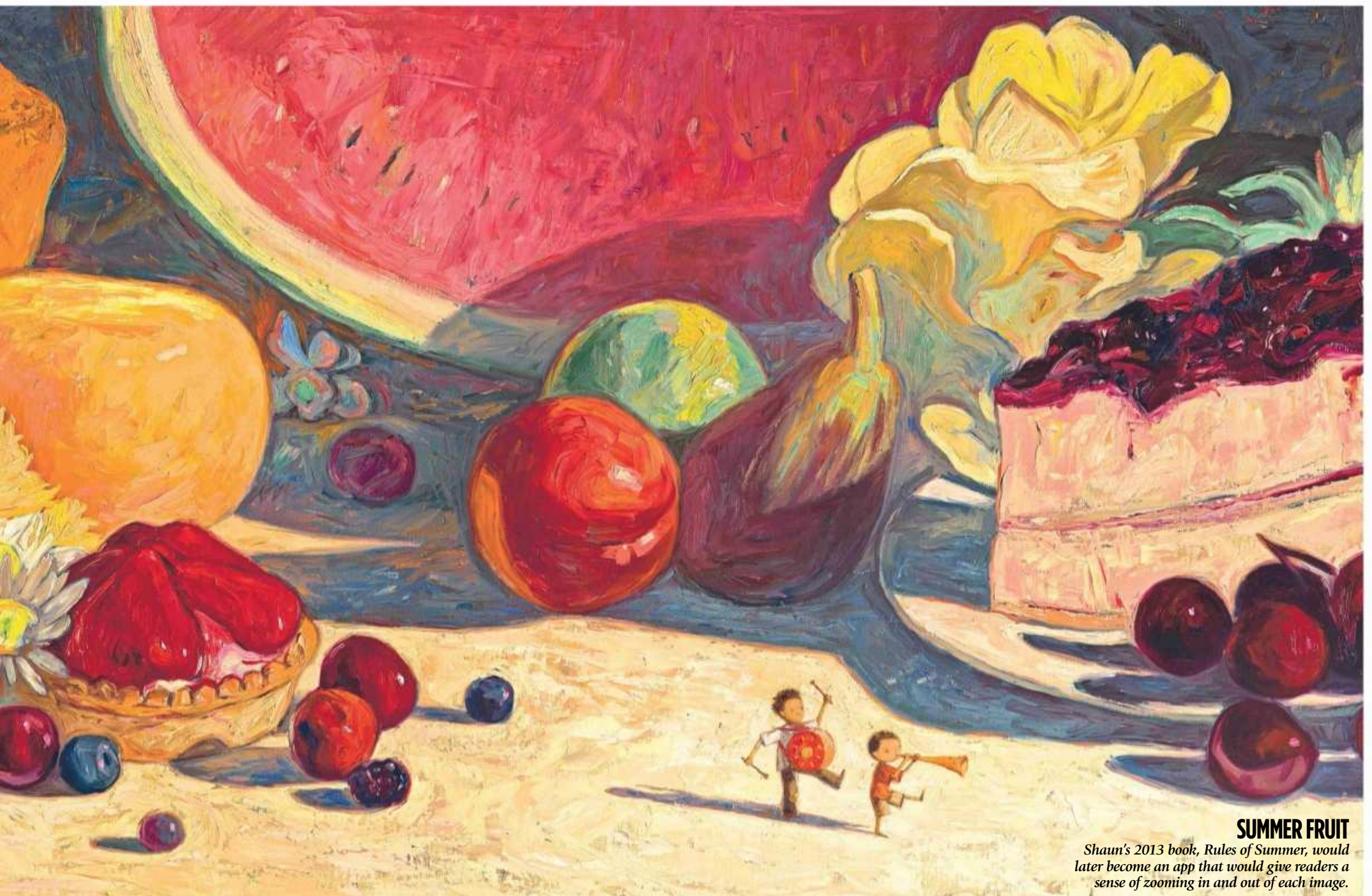
## BRAVE NEW WORLD

Shaun often builds models of the scenes he's drawing. "In the case of *The Arrival* I was also using friends and family by filming them and using photographs of them doing things to help me figure out what the story was."



## OFFICE DRONE

The hard-working insect in Shaun's latest book, *Cicada*, chirrups the song "Tok Tok Tok!" as he toils away.



## SUMMER FRUIT

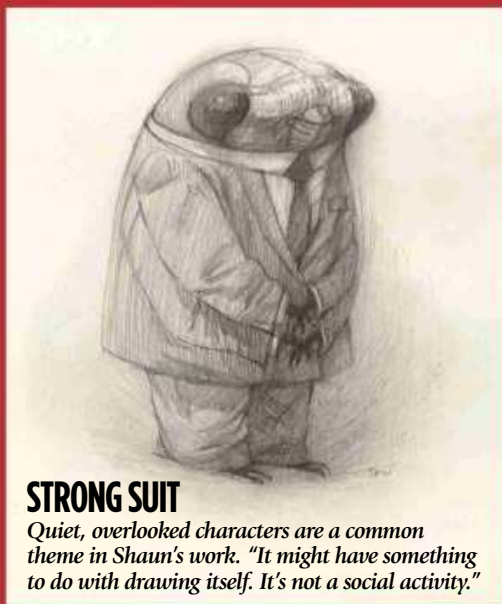
Shaun's 2013 book, *Rules of Summer*, would later become an app that would give readers a sense of zooming in and out of each image.



## DESIGNING A PICTURE BOOK CHARACTER

Shaun gradually developed the look of his latest character, Cicada, over the course of eight years

Sometimes Shaun's characters start off as drawings without a sense of place or a storyline. "In the case of Cicada it was very much about the context, and I knew immediately that this was an insect working in an office," he reveals.



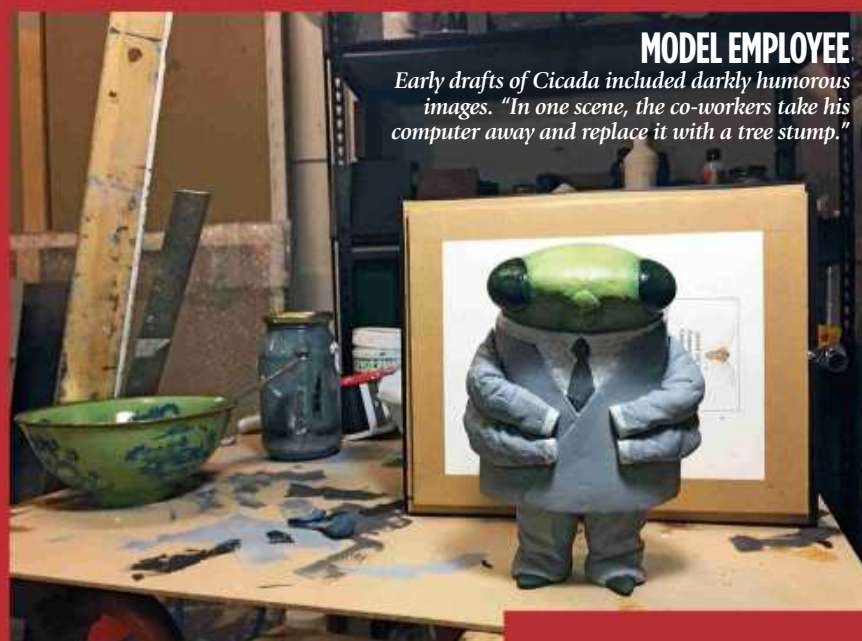
### STRONG SUIT

Quiet, overlooked characters are a common theme in Shaun's work. "It might have something to do with drawing itself. It's not a social activity."

The cicada's 17-year life cycle also played into the design, and tied into the story of a dull working life leading to a glorious retirement.

"I have a very early sculpture on my desk from about 2010," says Shaun. "I'd been thinking about this character for a long time so I thought I'll just make a little model of it to see if that helps. I found a shampoo bottle and I just worked some clay around it and made this little sculpture of a cicada. You couldn't tell what it was because it was an abstract sculpture where he's just doing some paperwork, and that's been kicking around in the ensuing eight years between that sculpture and it finally becoming a story and a book."

Even before making the sculpture, Shaun was sketching the character doing paperwork and



### MODEL EMPLOYEE

Early drafts of Cicada included darkly humorous images. "In one scene, the co-workers take his computer away and replace it with a tree stump."

hanging around a water cooler. "Often the sketches involve some kind of abuse at the hands of his coworkers," Shaun adds. "There's also further anxieties created by the fact that the cicada is an extremely efficient worker and never reacts to anything, so that was always the core idea. Just this bug being very good at his job, and by being quiet he brings out the worst in humankind."



### CICADA SCULPT

Shaun reasons that downtrodden characters like the cicada work because "immediately they attract the audience's sympathy."

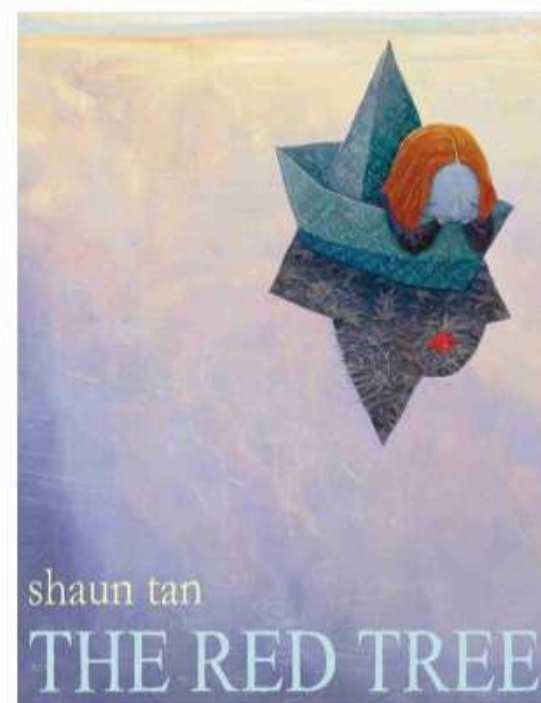


### INFLUENTIAL ART

Even though Shaun didn't set out to write a therapeutic book, *The Red Tree* has had a profound effect on people. "You can't get a stronger review than that – someone telling you that a book saved their life. That's pretty amazing."

freelancer by submitting illustrations and paintings to small-press magazines. "Perth wasn't exactly a centre of publishing or an illustration culture, but it's as good a place as any," says Shaun.

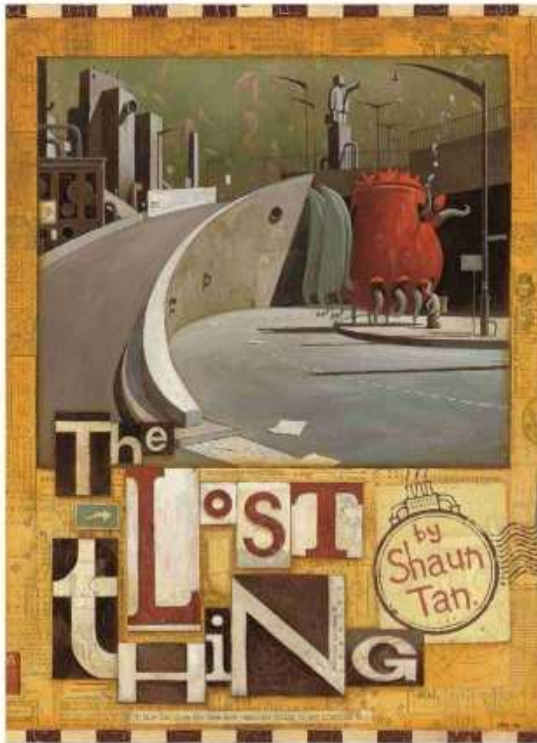
"I gradually got better jobs," he continues. "I was being asked to illustrate some small horror stories and other genre fiction, and maybe there



### SMOOTH SAILING

*The Red Tree* scooped Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature in 2002.





## LOST PROPERTY

The cover of *The Lost Thing* references Cahill Expressway, a painting by fellow Australian artist Jeffrey Smart.

“It cemented my interest in picture books as a means of telling all kinds of story”

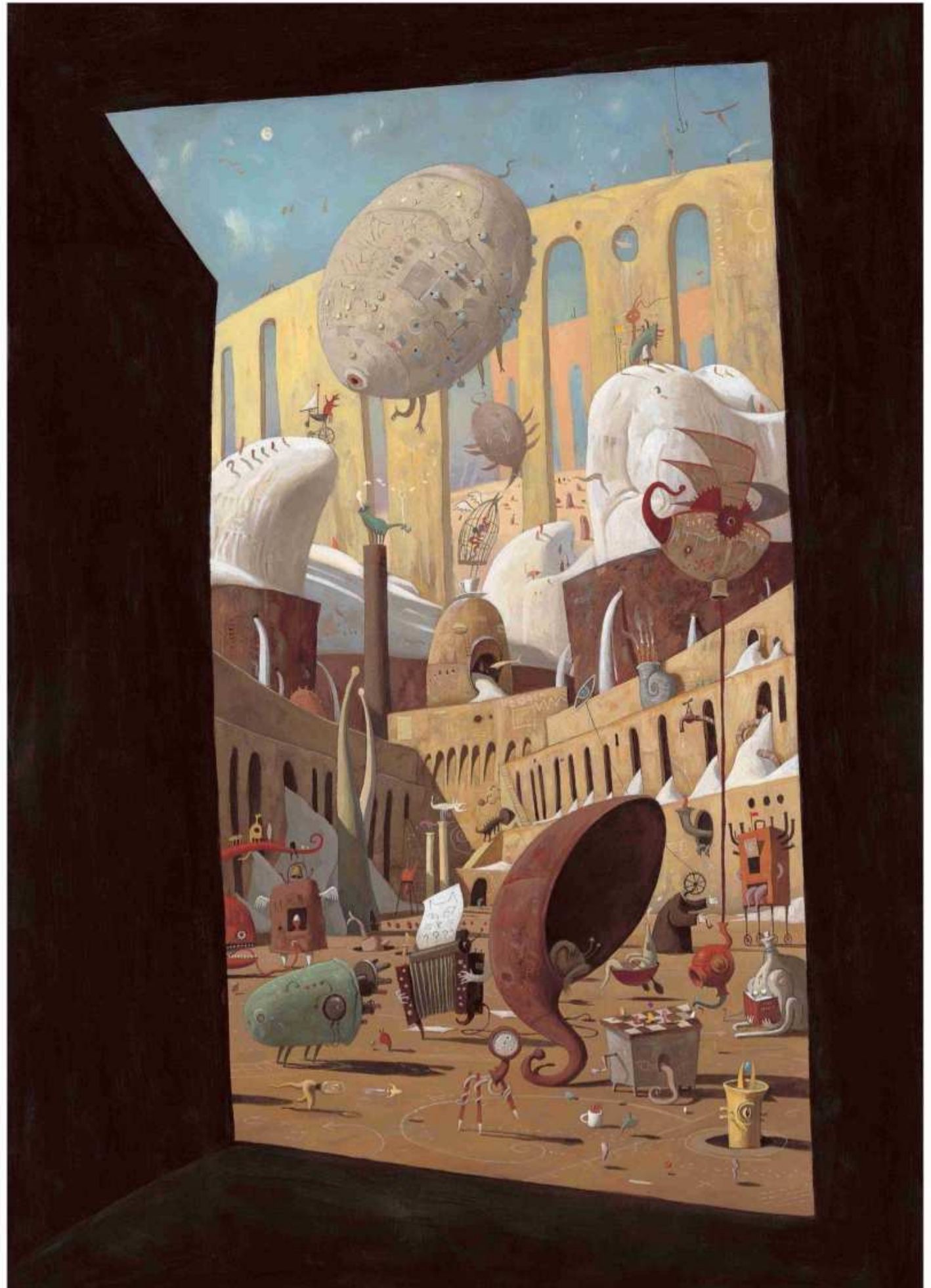
weren't so many other illustrators in Australia at the time who were specialising in that kind of work. It led to a series of relationships with editors and other writers, and I started to do picture books collaboratively.”

This all came to a head in 1998 when Shaun collaborated with edgy young adult writer John Marsden on *The Rabbits*, a cautionary tale of colonial rule by rabbits.

“I use the term collaboration loosely because we didn't really speak to each other, which was just because of distance,” says Shaun. “It was the first time that I'd been given an illustration assignment where the publishers more or less said, 'Feel free to do whatever you like.' I was quite anxious about that, but the result was way better than I expected.”

*The Rabbits* was well-received upon release. Its themes also generated controversy by tapping into sensitive aspects of Australian history that were the subject of charged political debate at the time.

“I was surprised at the kind of world that emerged through about a year spent working on *The Rabbits*,” says Shaun. “I got to the end of it, and I



really felt that this was a complete project that I can be proud of, and it was some sort of accomplishment. It cemented my interest in picture books as a means of telling all kinds of story – even very strange stories.”

## LOST AND FOUND

Despite the controversy surrounding *The Rabbits*, Shaun still felt the book flew beneath the radar. “I quite liked that you could create work that not many people see,” he says. “But it's

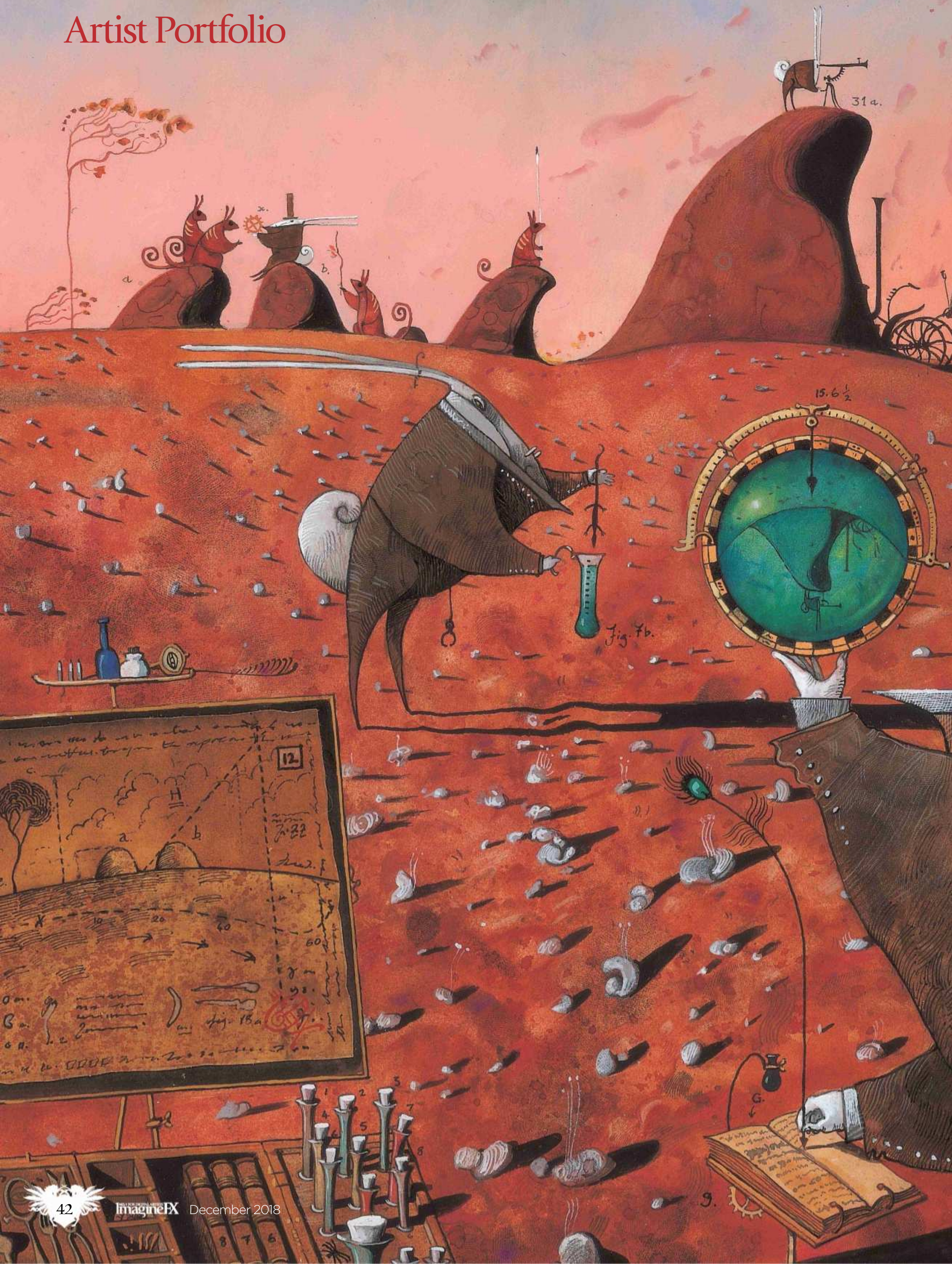
## FINDING HOME

*The world of picture books is uniquely liberating for Shaun. “Books aren't profitable, so that frees you up. There's not a great burden of having to make money for the publisher – you just need to sell a small amount of copies and that'll be okay.”*

there and it sort of develops its own audience over time. There's not a heavy critical environment or anything like that, so you can kind of get away with some quite strange things.”

Overlooked and unusual objects were the subject of the first picture book Shaun wrote and illustrated: *The Lost Thing*. Coming off the back of *The Rabbits*, *The Lost Thing* was completed in a year alongside other work. The story of a boy who finds a mysterious creature and tries to find a home ➤







## THINKING OUTSIDE THE HUTCH

Illustrating John Marsden's *The Rabbits* was a turning point in Shaun's career...

"To be honest," says Shaun, "I don't know how the book came about. John had read something about the experience of indigenous Americans and this inspired him to write a short poem. He'd given it to a publisher and they probably thought this could be a really good picture book, we've got this young wet behind the ears illustrator here who might be interested, he likes science fiction and fantasy..."

"He didn't collaborate closely with me on *The Rabbits*, but we still had a really good discussion right at the beginning. But I didn't actually meet him until long after the book was published.

"I didn't know what to do with the text for a long time. It kind of felt so alien to me, and also I felt a little bit rudderless. Previously, I'd worked closely with a senior author, which is somebody John Marsden was, and they'd helped me a lot by explaining what I needed to consider. And the fact that he was pretty much sort of saying you're free to do whatever you want, I felt a little bit lost. So the dilemma of that forced me to really think hard about illustration and what it is and what I can do.

"I became very resourceful and I think that probably accounts for the originality of *The Rabbits*, as well as the fact that I was pretty naive. I didn't know that much about picture books so I wasn't constrained by any expectation of tradition or things like that. I just thought about what would I like to see, and that's how I went about developing the images."

### COLONIAL CRITTERS

*The creative freedom that came with working on *The Rabbits* suited Shaun's working methods. "I start off just by going crazy and it's just kind of garbled nonsense, and from that you sort of weed out the gems and you sort of nurture those and then the evolutionary process begins."*



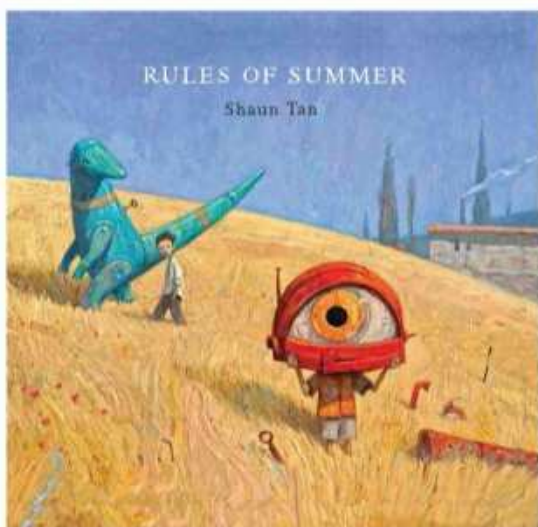


➔ for it was warmly received by publishers, who felt that Shaun had finally decided to create a book for young children.

When Shaun submitted a dummy version of the book though, the publishers joked that it had seemed too good to be true. "Because, of course, the illustrations are quite different to the story in many ways and they deal

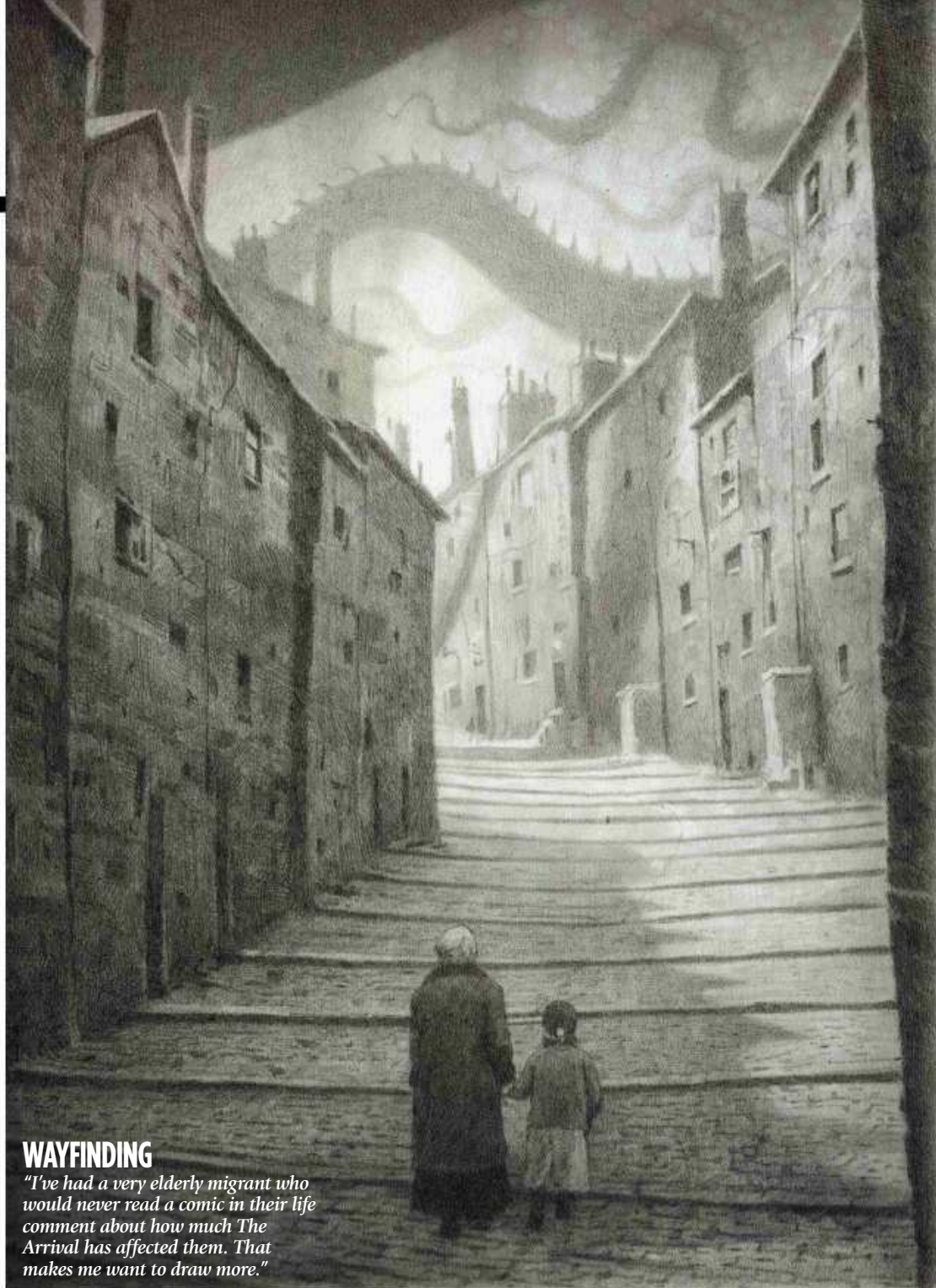
## GOOD TASTE

*Shaun likes it when readers find their own meaning in his work, such as with Rules of Summer. "I think readers are far more advanced in having very eclectic tastes when it comes to the kind of material they'll read and the way they approach illustrated literature."*



## SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

*The app created for Rules of Summer gave Shaun the chance to experiment with creating soundscapes while keeping the visuals static.*



## WAYFINDING

*"I've had a very elderly migrant who would never read a comic in their life comment about how much The Arrival has affected them. That makes me want to draw more."*

with a lot of what I think are adult concepts," explains the illustrator.

Shaun adds that, "At the same time I wanted the story to be very accessible for young children and so I think I was trying to balance quite a few things with *The Lost Thing*.

"It also felt like a really personal story. At the time I was 25, still pretty unemployed, still struggling to find steady work and pay my bills and see any kind of future as a visual artist,

wasn't taken seriously and how that's kind of a good thing."

## CREATIVE TECHNIQUES

Plenty more picture books followed, as well as forays into the world of films thanks to concept work for Pixar's *WALL-E* and Blue Sky Studios' *Horton Hears a Who!* in 2008, and 2011's animated version of *The Lost Thing* released by Passion Animation Studios. Through working on a range of

**“Cicada had a strange humour to it. I tried to integrate it with other stories, but it just kept wanting to fly free”**

and so the story kind of reflects all those things.”

The book's full title, *The Lost Thing – A Tale For Those With More Important Things To Pay Attention To*, is a nod to the way audiences discover his work, with adult readers often coming across copies by accident while shopping for nieces or nephews and keeping them for themselves. "That was also a real comment on my part about the status of picture books and illustration generally. The fact that it

projects, Shaun has refined techniques to help his imagination flow rather than solve technical problems.

"One of those techniques is building small-scale models," says Shaun. "I would make little dioramas out of paper and move things around and photograph them. It's a form of sketching. Rather than drafting lines and erasing them and shifting them, you're actually moving objects around to try and get a composition and a sense of visual space and narrative."



*The Red Tree's theme of struggling through adversity resonated with readers. "I've had a few people at signings who can't even talk to me about it, like they just become quite frozen."*




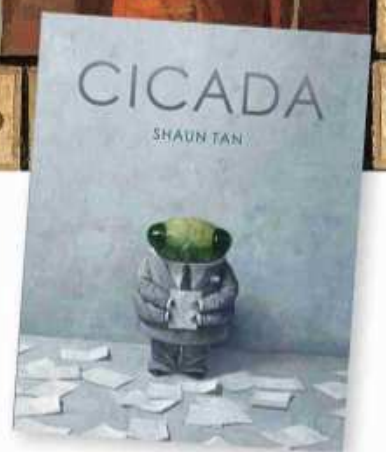
For Cicada, his latest book about a diligent and underappreciated office insect, Shaun created detailed sculptures and small arrangements of architecture made out of foam cork board. These models would stand still just long enough for him to take photos and start composing the story.

"Part of the problem I have as an artist is I can't imagine things that well until I see them. So whatever process allows that to happen before I lose interest in the story really helps."

Cicada has been in mental development for years, but once Shaun found a way into the story it was painted and designed in just three months. "Cicada was its own very unique species with a kind of strange humour and absurdity to it," he says. "I was trying to integrate it with a bunch of other stories, but it just kept wanting to fly free. So I just thought, okay it's a separate book, I'll think about it that way, and as soon as I did that it kind of unfolded surprisingly

easily and I could imagine it very clearly. So it was an easy book to get down on paper."

As well as models and sculptures, the support of his friends, family and readers also helps Shaun to keep creating. "Even though most other artists are quite isolated, I'm preoccupied with my own idiosyncratic concerns," he says. "I'm influenced by the thought that I'm doing some good by drawing, rather than inflicting pain or boredom." 



## MIRACULOUS METAMORPHOSIS

*The story of the mild-mannered insect who eventually breaks free from a lifetime of office drudgery was inspired in part by Shaun's father.*



# SIXMOREVODKA

Artists at the boutique German art studio tell **Tom May** how they combine hard work for clients with acres of fun, self-improvement sessions and the best Berlin has to offer

**S**IXMOREVODKA, the boutique concept art studio, made Berlin its home in 2010. The company provides artwork, ideas and conceptual services for some of the entertainment industry's biggest clients, including Riot Games, WB Games, Marvel, Ubisoft, Activision and Blizzard.

SIXMOREVODKA's character designs, narrative illustrations and cover art have enhanced many award-winning video games, magazines, movies and comic books. And the studio has also released some intriguing in-house projects of its own.

The best known are the fantasy world of Orken and the post-apocalyptic tabletop RPG Degenesis which, as we reported in issue 164, was relaunched for 2018 together with a campaign-cum-art book, Black Atlantic.

"Degenesis and Orken were developed by our CEO and founder Marko Djurdjevic, so even though they're very different from one



another, they have a very distinct, 'Marko' style," explains art director **Jelena Kevic Djurdjevic**. "I'd

describe this as bold, brave and uncompromising in both a visual and a narrative sense."

But that's not necessarily a style →

## STUDIO PROFILE

Falberg is one of the iconic characters from Degenesis, the role-playing game set in a 'primal punk' world.

### Studio PROFILE

**SIXMOREVODKA**

**LOCATION:** Berlin, Germany

**PROJECTS:** Degenesis: Rebirth Edition; Black Atlantic; Orken; client projects (under NDA)

**WEB:** [www.sixmorevodka.com](http://www.sixmorevodka.com)



“ CEO and founder Marko’s style is bold, brave and uncompromising, in both a visual and a narrative sense ”





Marko Djurdjevic painted this imposing character from Orken, the studio's latest intellectual property.

➡ it carries over to its commercial work – well, not always, anyway. “When we’re working with clients, we’re often required to change our style and experiment,” says Jelena, who previously worked as a freelancer for Marvel. “We’re known for our high-end marketing style illustrations and concepts. But our visual range is much broader than that, and that’s the reason why clients like working with us.”

## EXIT THE COMFORT ZONE

Lead artist **Gerald Parel**, who’s also produced artwork for Marvel, says this can be a tough challenge, but it’s one he relishes. “It pushes me out of my comfort zone and forces me to analyse what I’m doing on a daily basis,” he says. “Painting a large number of pictures,



“When working with clients, we’re often required to change our style and experiment”



Character concept art for a number of different tribes in the world of Orken.

and delivering them with our quality benchmark in time is what we pride ourselves on, no matter what problems we encounter. And that’s possible because each artist is able to both work as a solo player and a team member.”

Junior artist **Alessandro Poli** explains how they go about creating concept art on a typical client project. “We’ll start with thumbnails, which usually evolve into tight greyscale drawings,” he says. “Once these have been approved by Jelena, we’ll work on colour

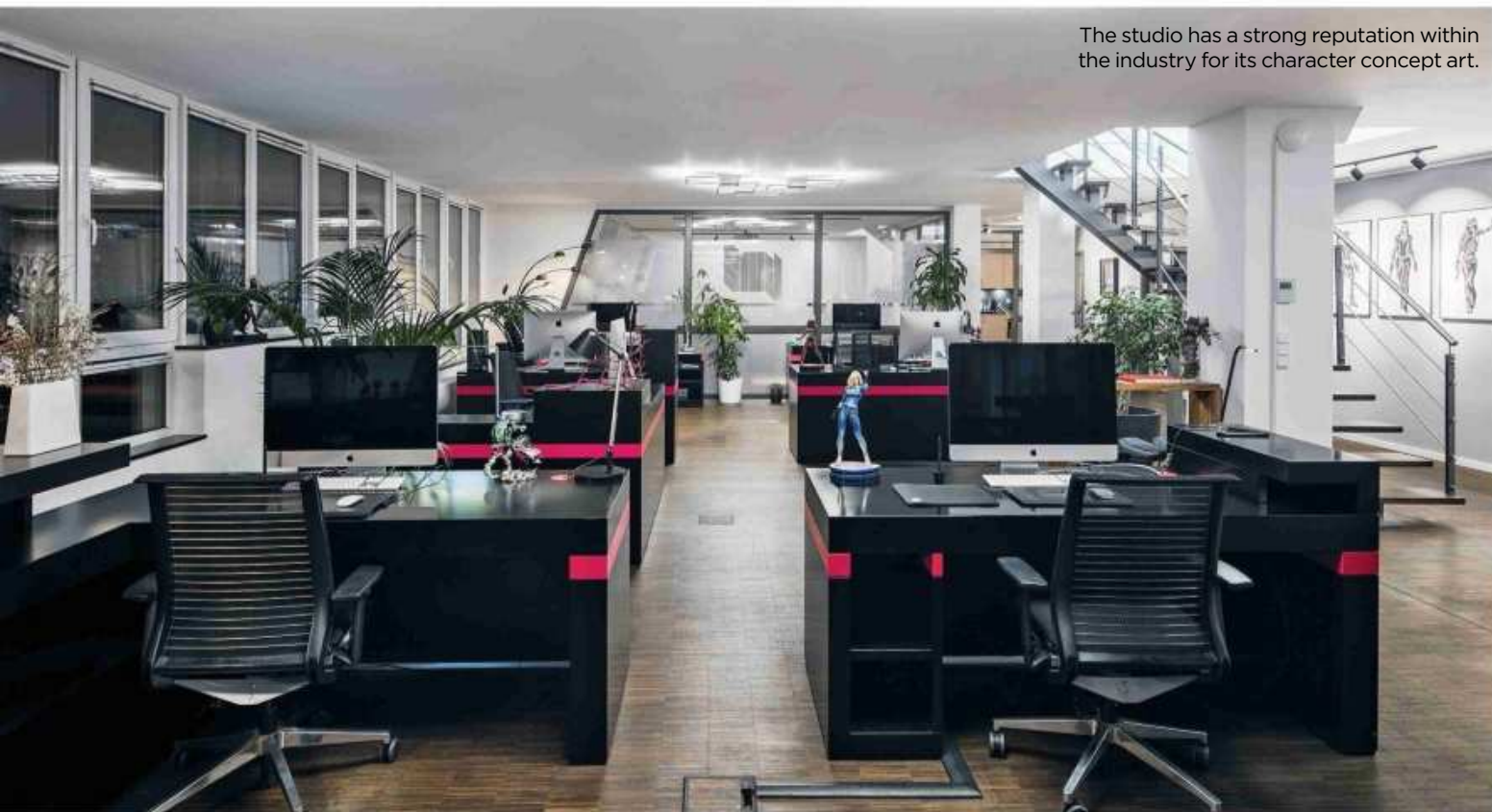


variations. Again, Jelena will pick one and that’s when we can start the rendering marathons. Of course, the process may vary from person to person. I, for example, have less precise, rougher drawings that blossom more in the painting part, whereas some of my peers prefer going for a really tight drawing from the get-go.”

Intermediate artist **Claudiu-Antoni Magherusan**, who came from Romania to work at SIXMOREVODKA, describes his own approach. “Regardless ➡







The studio has a strong reputation within the industry for its character concept art.

## MONIKA PAŁOSZ

On life as an intermediate artist at SIXMOREVODKA...

### What kind of art do you paint?

It's usually character or creature concept art or illustration. Together with Claudiu-Antoni, I'm also responsible for junior artists and we help them develop their drawing and illustration skills.

### How do you approach a painting assignment?

I usually have a clear idea of what I'm going to do before I start. I need to get my head around the story and what's going on in this project, or in this particular piece of concept art or illustration, and then I draw out a few quick sketches or thumbnails. I present my favourites to my art director and after some time spent discussing my work, we settle on one, which I then clean up, making a tight drawing. Then I colour it and take it to final.

### What's been your proudest moment at the studio?

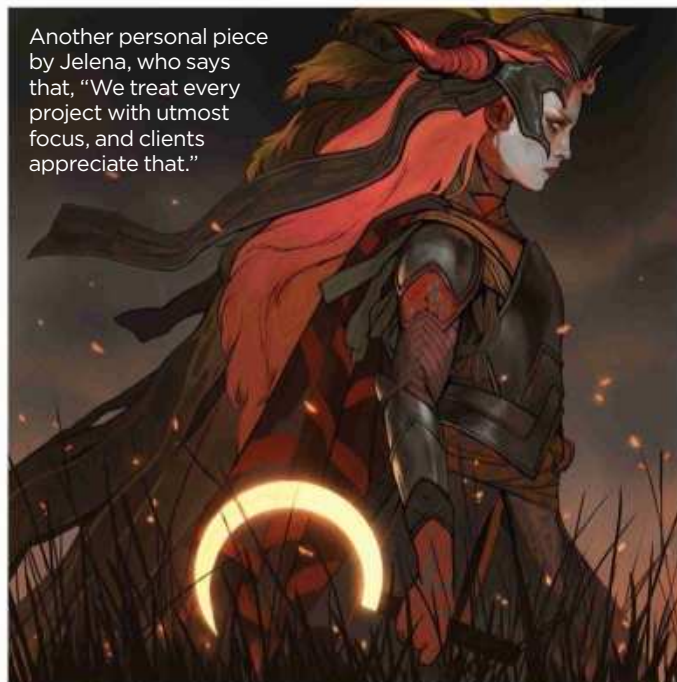
It would probably be doing my first illustration for Degeneration. Before I joined SIXMOREVODKA, that was something I dreamed of doing. It was cool to see it printed and part of the big project.

### What's it like to work here?

It's great! I'm always amazed by how well people here get along. Everybody's working towards the common goal, which is making the best-possible illustrations. If I feel that I'm not up to a task, or if something can be done better in a piece, then I can easily ask a colleague who excels at this particular thing, and the final result will be all the better for it.



A personal artwork by Jelena. "Working at SIXMOREVODKA is an amazing process of constant learning," she says.



Another personal piece by Jelena, who says that, "We treat every project with utmost focus, and clients appreciate that."



Claudiu-Antoni Magherusan painted these hyena riders from the world of Orken which, like Degeneration, was originated and led by Marko.

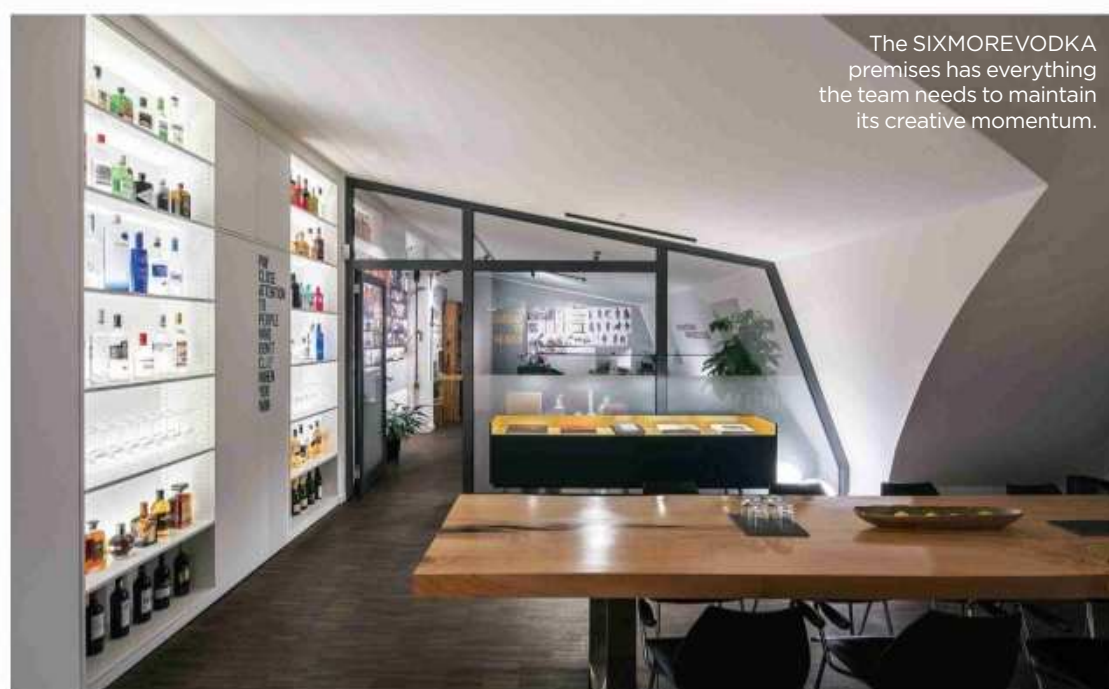


Originally hailing from Poland, Monika has been working as a concept artist at SIXMOREVODKA since 2015.

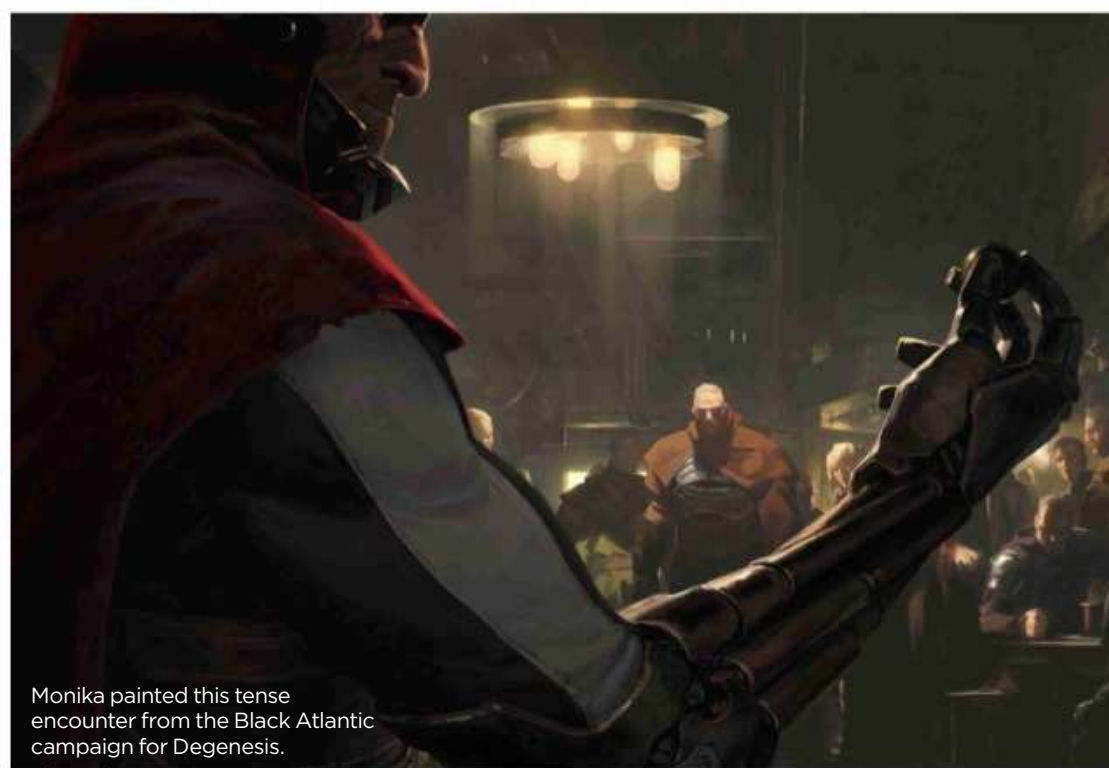
[www.artstation.com/monikapalos](http://www.artstation.com/monikapalos)



Concept artwork for Degenesis. Almost a decade old, the RPG was recently relaunched with a brand new look.



The SIXMOREVODKA premises has everything the team needs to maintain its creative momentum.



Monika painted this tense encounter from the Black Atlantic campaign for Degenesis.

➡ of the subject matter, I start out with a couple of rough drafts so I can get a sense of what I'm aiming for," he says. "Next, I usually do a pass where I tighten up the drawing for my main elements and leave tertiary reads as simple shapes. I then block in all my different materials, add their local values, and start lighting up my scene.

"At this point, if I feel that my piece is standing on its feet, I start applying colour and a bit of texture. From this point on, it's just cleaning and

rendering until it looks done. The level of polish might vary, based on what I want to achieve with it."

## EVERY DAY'S A FUN DAY

The work may be hard and the pace relentless, but studio life can also be fun, stresses Gerald. "There's not one day when I'm not crying of laughter. These guys are incredibly funny. We're a bunch of artists, which means potential ego-trips to cross – and yet we keep having a good time."

Intermediate artist **Monika Pałosz**, who moved from Poland to work at SIXMOREVODKA, adds that it's also



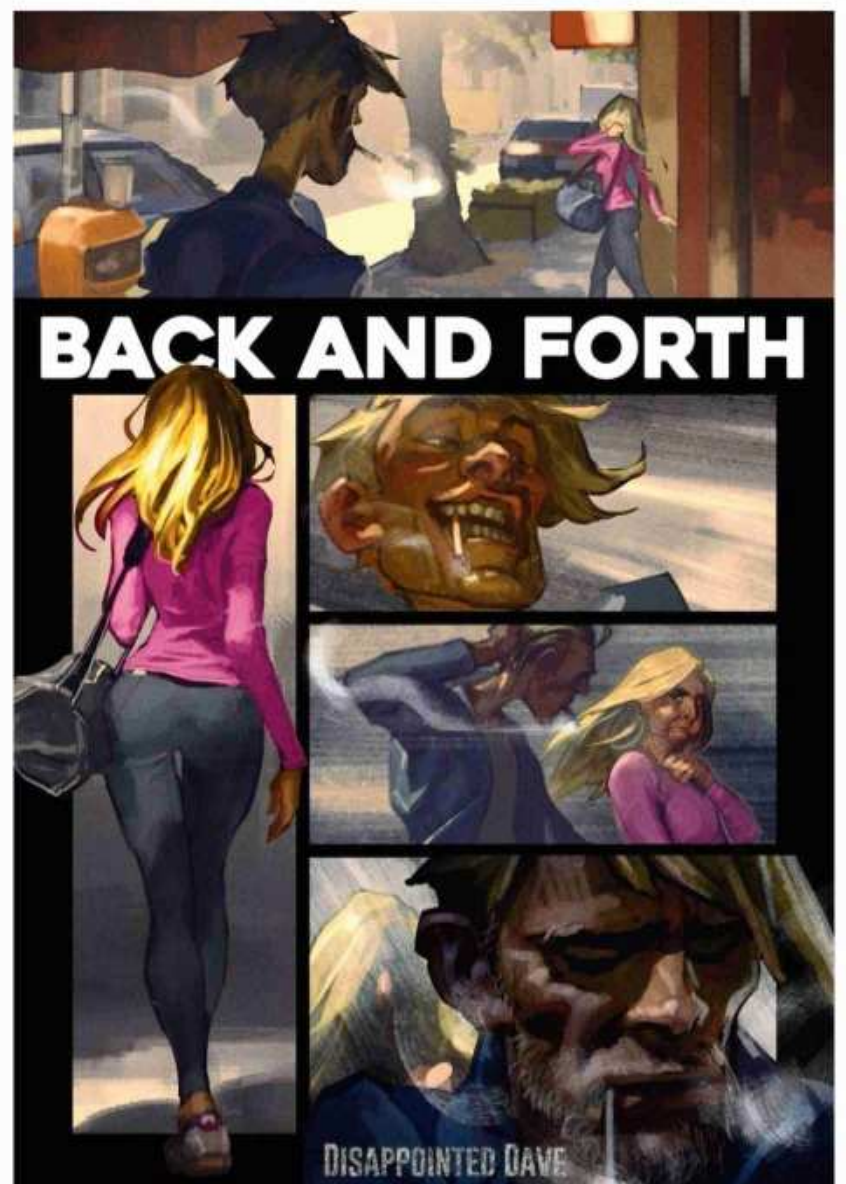
a very nurturing environment. "I've been here for three years now and I've loved every single day," she says. "What

I've found different about this studio is how much time my seniors and colleagues spend on sharing their knowledge and expertise.





One character from Orken gets their revenge in this action piece.



Lead artist Gerald's personal piece is different from the studio's usual output, yet still features a strong sense of storytelling – a SIXMOREVODKA staple.



Doctor Vega has the capacity to harm as well as heal in the Degeneration universe.

“What I’ve found different about this studio is how much time my colleagues spend on sharing their knowledge”

Demonstrations and feedbacks are a big part of our daily routine.”

It’s also a pleasant place to work, says Claudiu-Antoniou. “The space itself is amazing. We work in a neat and spacious studio, with all the amenities we need to be happy and productive. We also live in Berlin, so there’s no shortage of things to keep you sane (or insane) outside of work.”

And if you fancy moving to the German capital yourself, be aware that SIXMOREVODKA is hiring. “We’re

always on the look-out for new artists to expand our team,” says Jelena.

“What interests us the most are drawing and painting skills, anatomy, composition, a sense of design and functionality, and storytelling.

“Also, we want to work with people who feel at home in the team environment, who are easy to work with, who can deal with the pressure and deadlines. So it’s a mixture of talent, drive, determination, professionalism and teamwork.”



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November 2018

Learn to paint an ethereal portrait, a group of adventurers and a war beast in our fantasy special issue. Tran Nguyen passes on her tips for honing your artistic prowess and we check out the latest Magic: The Gathering card set.



### Issue 165

October 2018

In our packed animation issue, pro artists pass on their advice on how to break into the industry. There's tips on posing, rendering, storyboarding and character design, and we talk to Disney legend Armand Serrano.



### Issue 164

September 2018

Simon Goinard's ethereal cover art lights the way to an issue that will help boost your concept art skills, with advice from Martin Nebelong, Anthony Macbain and Eddie Del Rio. Plus, we talk to Harry Potter film artist Rob Bliss.



### Issue 163

August 2018

Become a manga superstar with the help of the pros, including Toni Infante and the artists from Collateral Damage Studios. We explore Paul Kwon's workspace, talk to Valentina Remenar and explore Copic marker techniques.

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\*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.



## Sam Hogg

Horns, hats and characters from the web video series Critical Role crop up on a regular basis on this concept artist's sketch pages

### Artist PROFILE

**Sam Hogg**

LOCATION: England



A UK-based concept artist in the video games industry, Sam has worked on a varied number of titles and IPs from Forza Horizon to Hearthstone, James Bond to Transformers. A Blizzard fan girl and Critter, she's also creator of The Whaler Girl novel and art book project.  
[www.artofsamhogg.com](http://www.artofsamhogg.com)

#### CADUCEUS CLAY

"I'm a huge Critical Role fan and Taliesin's firbolg character just fell out of the pencil."



#### CROWN

"Inktober is always a great excuse to practise in a medium that usually terrifies me."

“ Blending cultures to create unexpected yet familiar costuming is one of my favourite things to do ”





## KALAM EXPLORATION

"These are early sketches my Whaler Girl's villain, whose look was a mix of Moorish, pirates and Day of the Dead."

## DARK MERCHANT

"Blending cultures to create unexpected yet familiar costuming is one of my favourite things to do when I'm building worlds."



# Sketchbook



## NILA

"Nila's performance by voice actor Sumalee Montano for Critical Role really moved me, especially her thoughts on the death of a character."



I find ways to see them in nature, sometimes just the leaves on the trees.

I pick one leaf and I know that it is a spirit moving to me.



## GRAPHIC COURTESANS

"May Sketch a Day is always a fruitful exercise, because it enables me to discover new styles like this."







## RAVAHN THUMBNAILS

"A pirate city set among huge rock stacks. I love finding ways to try and make the unbelievable grounded. See <https://ifxm.ag/samh-ravahn> for a timelapse video of my process."

## CRITICAL ROLE

"The larger-than-life characters and narrative antics that feature in Critical Role are never far from my sketchbook."

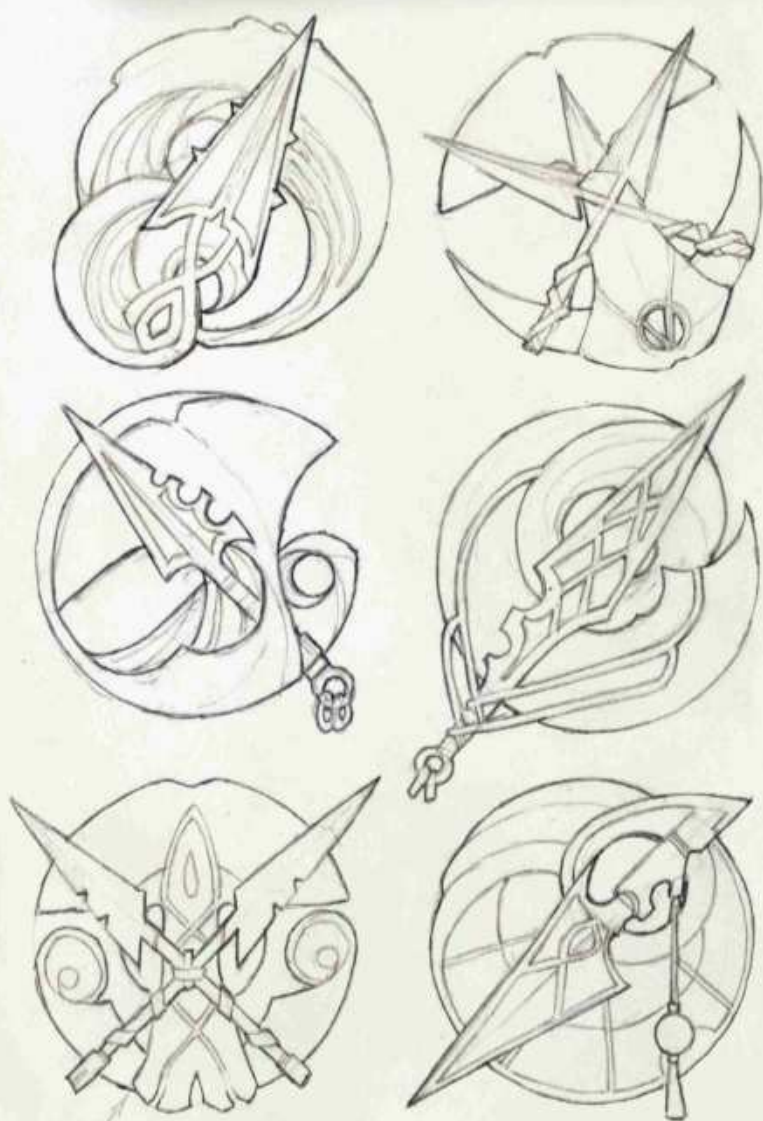


# Sketchbook



## DAICHEN

"My finished pieces often start as thumbnails like this. Redheads and big cats are my jam."



## THE SPEARS MOTIFS

"All the factions in the Whaler Girl have their own motifs. This is the Spears' design, who are a brotherhood of whalers."



## KALAM

"This is usually what happens when I just sketch for fun. I love exaggerating facial features."



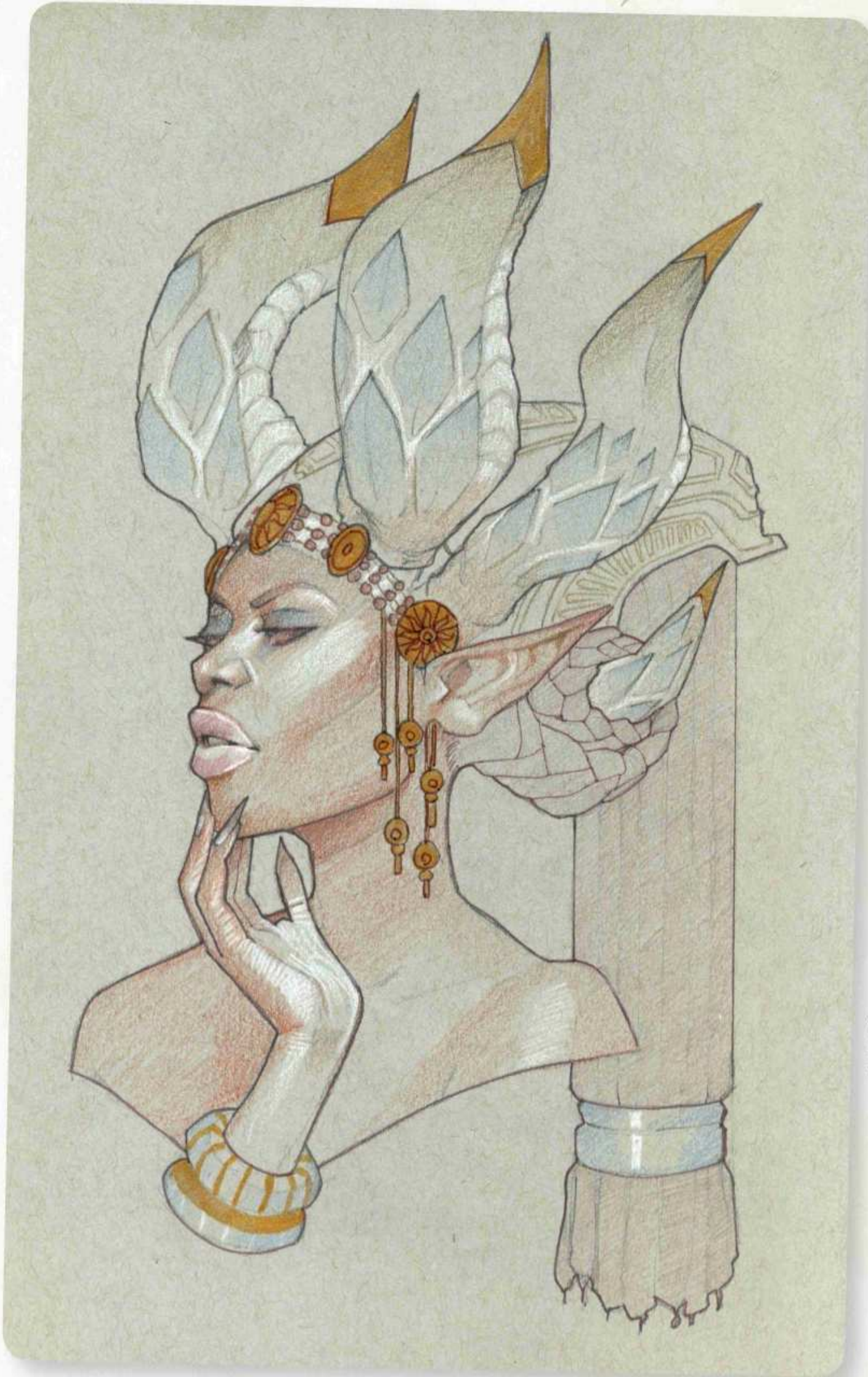
“Horns and headpieces are my go-to comfort zone drawing subjects”

## DRAGON QUEEN

“Toned sketchbooks are a fast favourite for sketching. Horns and headpieces are my go-to comfort zone drawing subjects.”

## DEMONS

“More horns and headpieces! Inspired by Brom, one of the artists whose work sent me on my fantasy art path.”





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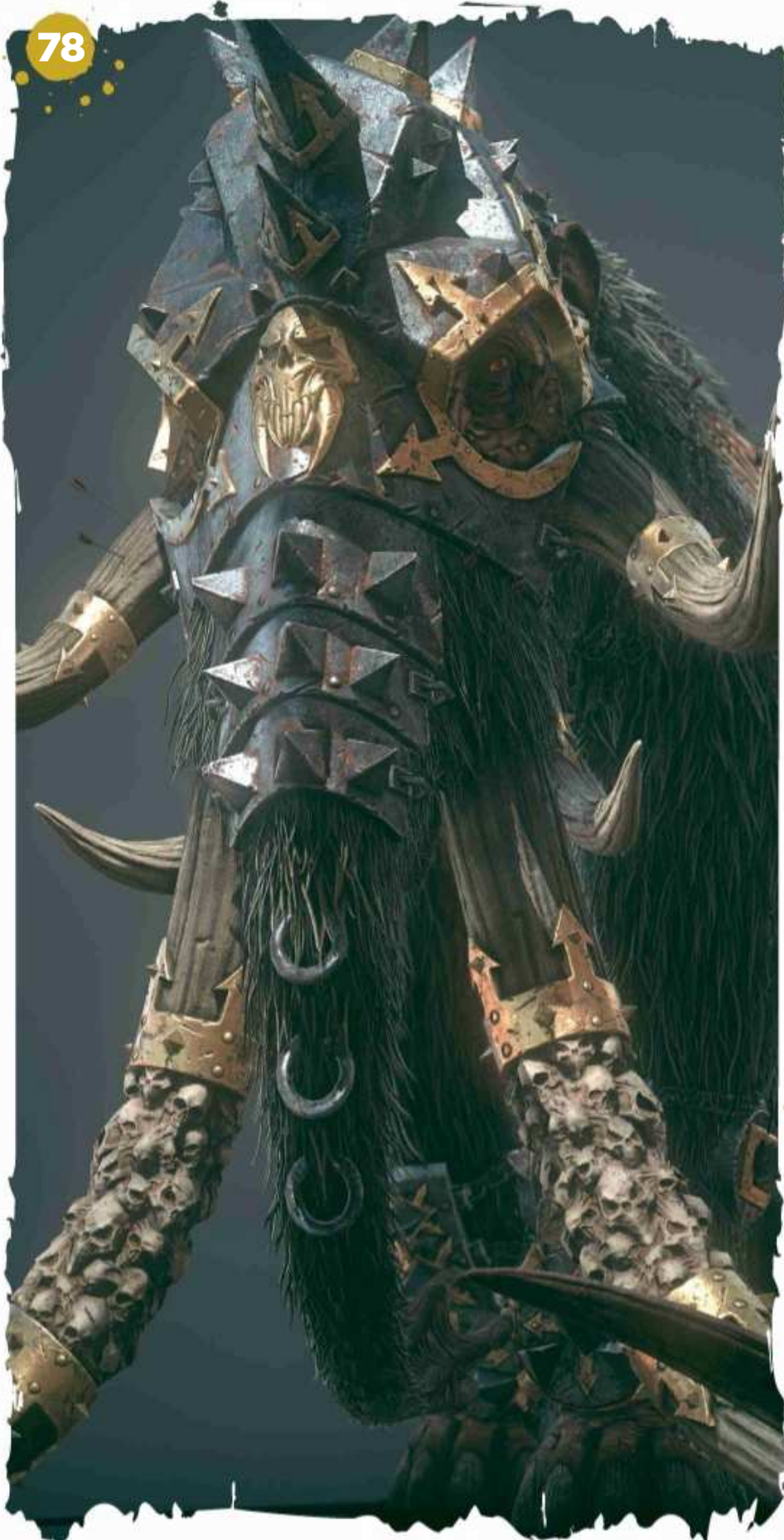
# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Workshops

**Workshops assets  
are available...**

Download each workshop's resources by turning to page 8. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.



Advice from the world's best artists



## This issue:

### 62 The female form: reference shots

Patrick J Jones explores the pitfalls to avoid when referencing photos, and how to draw your anatomy compositions with style.

### 70 Study the greats in Procreate

Gavin O'Donnell explains how analysing the work of the Old Masters is a good way to improve your artistic abilities.

### 78 Turn 2D art into a game asset

Baj Singh goes through his process of creating a 3D game-ready character from a piece of 2D concept art.

### 86 Create strong colour contrast

Follow keyframe artist Ricardo Guimaraes as he develops a sci-fi illustration that employs contrasts in colours to boost its degree of visual impact.





Figure drawing: part 1

# THE FEMALE FORM: REFERENCE SHOTS

**Patrick J Jones** explores the pitfalls to avoid when referencing photos, and how to draw your anatomy compositions with style



**DON'T MISS AN ISSUE!**

This is an eight-part workshop series. Turn to **page 4** to make sure you get the whole set!



Welcome to the first of eight workshops on drawing the figure. In these articles I'll recreate the

atmosphere of my life demos and offer you a first-class seat to watch over my shoulder as I explain my personal process as we explore the beauty of line and form found in the anatomy of the human figure.

Since we'll be working from photos, the focus of this first workshop will be on guiding you through the minefield of problems and solutions associated with photo-reference to better set you up for the following tutorials over the coming months. The camera's eye can be deceptive and we must be suspicious of every photo we work from.

Although knowledge of figure proportions should be learned, bear in mind that they are only a guide. Trying to shoehorn every figure to fit an eight-head-high ideal is the recipe for an uninspiring drawing. Learn your basic figure proportions so that they're stored in your subconscious, should you need them.

To achieve style we need to work with gesture, the spirit of the pose, the fluid nature in line. If we take gesture too far, though, our drawing will look wobbly. To counter that we need to also work with a solid structure, but too much structure can make for a stiff drawing, and therein lies the great balancing act of figurative art that we will explore together throughout these eight workshops. Let's get started... ➡

## Artist PROFILE

**Patrick J Jones**

LOCATION: Australia

Patrick J Jones is a figurative artist author and teacher. His art technique books, *The Anatomy of Style* and *The Sci-fi & Fantasy Techniques of Patrick J. Jones* were both award-winning best sellers. His next book on drawing the figure, *Figures from Life* will be available in hardcopy worldwide from October. [www.pjartworks.com](http://www.pjartworks.com)



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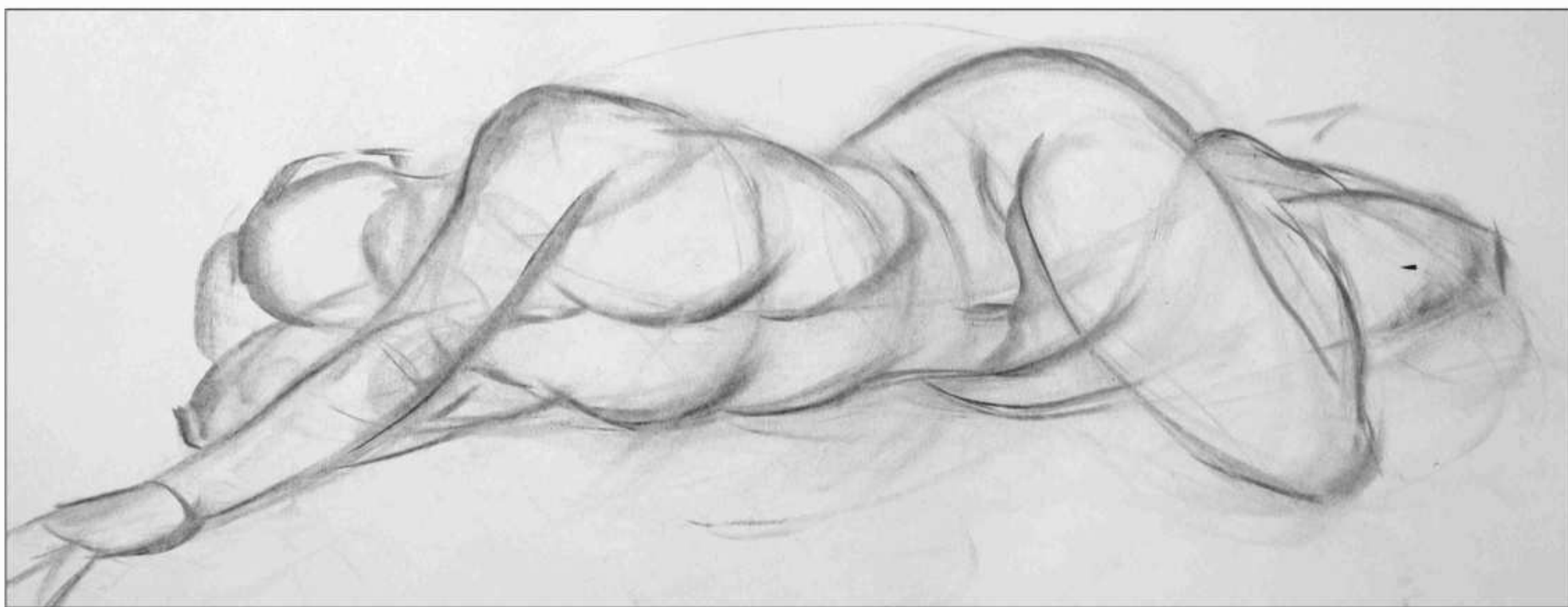
See page 8 now!





## 1 A photographic problem is identified

Here is my life model Katy perfectly lit and beautifully posed. We could wish for nothing more... until we take a closer look. I took this photo with a 50mm Prime Lens – the closest lens to the human eye – yet the cyclops eye of the camera is poor at judging depth compared to our human binocular vision. Look how small the foot is compared to the head, for instance.



## 2 The simple touch

Let's start with our attention level set to high. Using a small, two-finger wide piece of charcoal I draw the basic proportions, aware of lens distortion. I see that the far leg is so foreshortened, it looks amputated. This is a major fix. I also bring the thigh forward.

## 3 From simple to sophisticated

By starting my figure with basic shapes it's now much easier to draw more sophisticated lines on top. Here, I've drawn the face using small shapes inside a big shape. This is two of my disciplines in action at once: big to small; and simple to sophisticated. Note the gestural grip in action. Drawing with our gestural hand enables us to use the rhythm of our arm rather than our stiff wrist to make our marks. It gives us the freedom to draw long fluid lines on the paper.







## 4 Pushing the curves of the subject

I'm constantly analysing the photo reference. On closer inspection what appears to be a foot is actually the ankle twisting. I decide to draw the classic shape of a foot to make the drawing more clear. I'm improving what I observe in the photo in terms of artistic mark-making. Note how many times I exaggerate the curves to make the drawing more lively.



## 5 Draw what you feel

At this stage I step back from the art to check the drawing has solid structure. I lay in broad tones with my charcoal. Remember, our goal here is to interpret the reference. If we gauge success on how close we copy we'll end up with a stiff drawing that looks like a distorted photo. ➡





## 6 Completing the journeyman stage

Up until now I've juggled gesture with structure. It's an okay drawing, but nothing stylish. This is the journeyman stage, from which we can stamp our own style. Using tissue I blend tone into form, this also fades the drawing and gives me a second chance to draw better on top.



## 7 The second time around

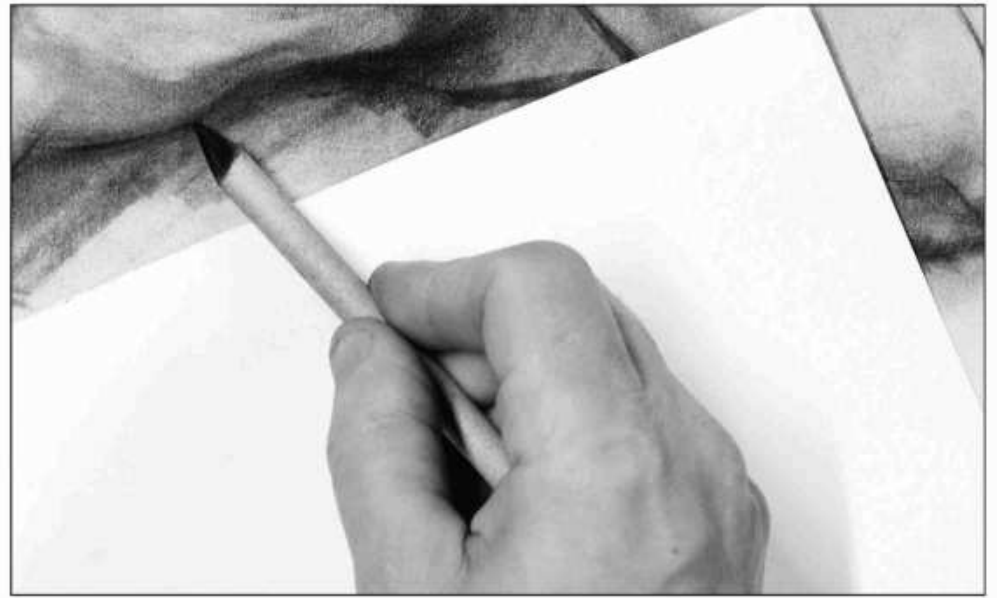
Here I'm making small structural adjustments and adding more tonal gestures. This second time around goes quickly – just a matter of minutes, which is a small investment for an hour-long drawing. From this point onward my quest is to further explore style in the drawing.



## 8 If it looks wrong, it is wrong!

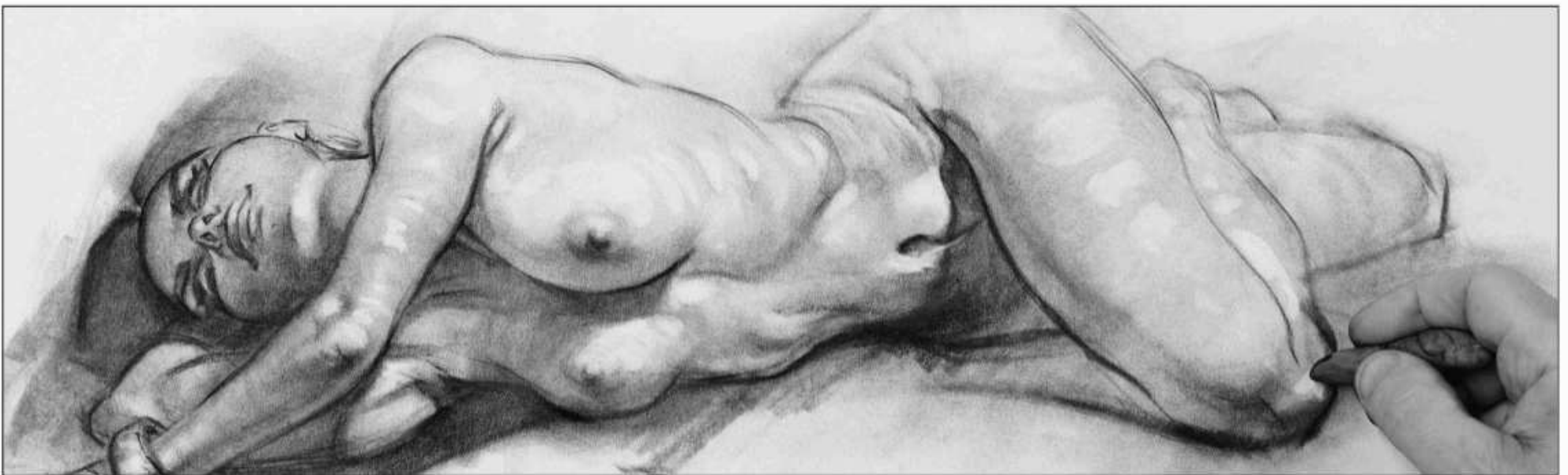
I use shadows to push the gesture, but omit the shadow of the xiphoid process (the small bone under the pointed arch of the ribcage). It looks odd here. Even though it's correct, it violates one of my art laws: "If it looks wrong, it's wrong, even if it's right!"





## 9 Always be drawing

Using a paper stump I push around the charcoal that's already on the paper rather than lay more charcoal down. This keeps the drawing light and fresh. I'm also mindful to always be drawing even when blending. I use a sheet of paper to prevent me smudging the drawing.



## 10 Slowly does it with an eraser

I 'draw' highlights with a kneadable eraser. I think of the eraser as a drawing tool rather than a correction tool. Slowly does it, especially in the early stages. Drawing fast is a false economy – if we rush a drawing then we inevitably spend most of our time fixing mistakes.



## 11 Identifying anatomical inaccuracies

I take a short coffee break away from the drawing and come back with a fresh eye. A break helps me see the bug bears more clearly when I return. I see the breasts are too close in shape while the lower rib cage is too smooth. I make minor changes to both bug bears and am ready for the big finish. ➡➡

**WORKSHOP MATERIALS**

**PENCIL**  
Pitt charcoal pencil

**CHARCOAL**  
General's soft charcoal pencil, General's compressed charcoal sticks

**MISCELLANEOUS**  
Paper stumps, Tissue, Washed and dried shammy leather cloth, Kneadable eraser, Mono eraser, Electric eraser, Newsprint.





## 12 In the search for personal style

I lay down a large swath of charcoal, then smudge it with a shammy leather cloth, playing with textures as I go. I learned of the shammy from Glen Vilppu a few years back and it's been part of my drawing arsenal ever since. Here I use it for abstract marks to ground the figure and add style.



## 13 Introduce the elements of fantasy

For this photoshoot I asked Katy to move from one pose to another using her emotions. I imagined a vampire in a bloodlust trance. With large charcoal sticks I draw abstract shapes then pencil in the breast plates and jewellery using hard erasers for highlights.



## 14 Introducing your own drawing style within the final gesture

I stop referencing the photo, because if we refer to the photo as 'correct' we might believe that every change is a mistake. I finish the drawing with gestural freedom. Learn to separate the photo from the drawing, because the drawing must stand alone. Look only at the drawing and you'll see the artist's style. As we learn to draw, we break away from the stiff rendering process of tracing and discover our own unique style.





## 15 Compare and contrast with The Lying Eye Study Sheet

With the drawing and photo side by side we can clearly see how all the micro changes came together to produce a drawing rather than a copy of a photo. Had we traced and simply rendered the photo we would have lost the gestural aspect that comes from freehand drawing. ●



## Procreate

# STUDY THE GREATS IN PROCREATE

**Gavin O'Donnell** explains how analysing the work of the Old Masters is a good way to improve your artistic abilities



### Artist PROFILE

**Gavin O'Donnell**

LOCATION: Ireland

Gavin's a 2D designer working for Brown Bag Films in Dublin, Ireland. He also does freelance concept work, including artwork for Daedalic Entertainment.  
<https://ifxm.ag/gavinod>



As we develop in life, one of the many ways we learn is through the emulation of others.

Emulating and

studying from successful pieces of art is a way to connect with the thought process, the techniques and choices historical artists made. Through this process we can grow as artists.

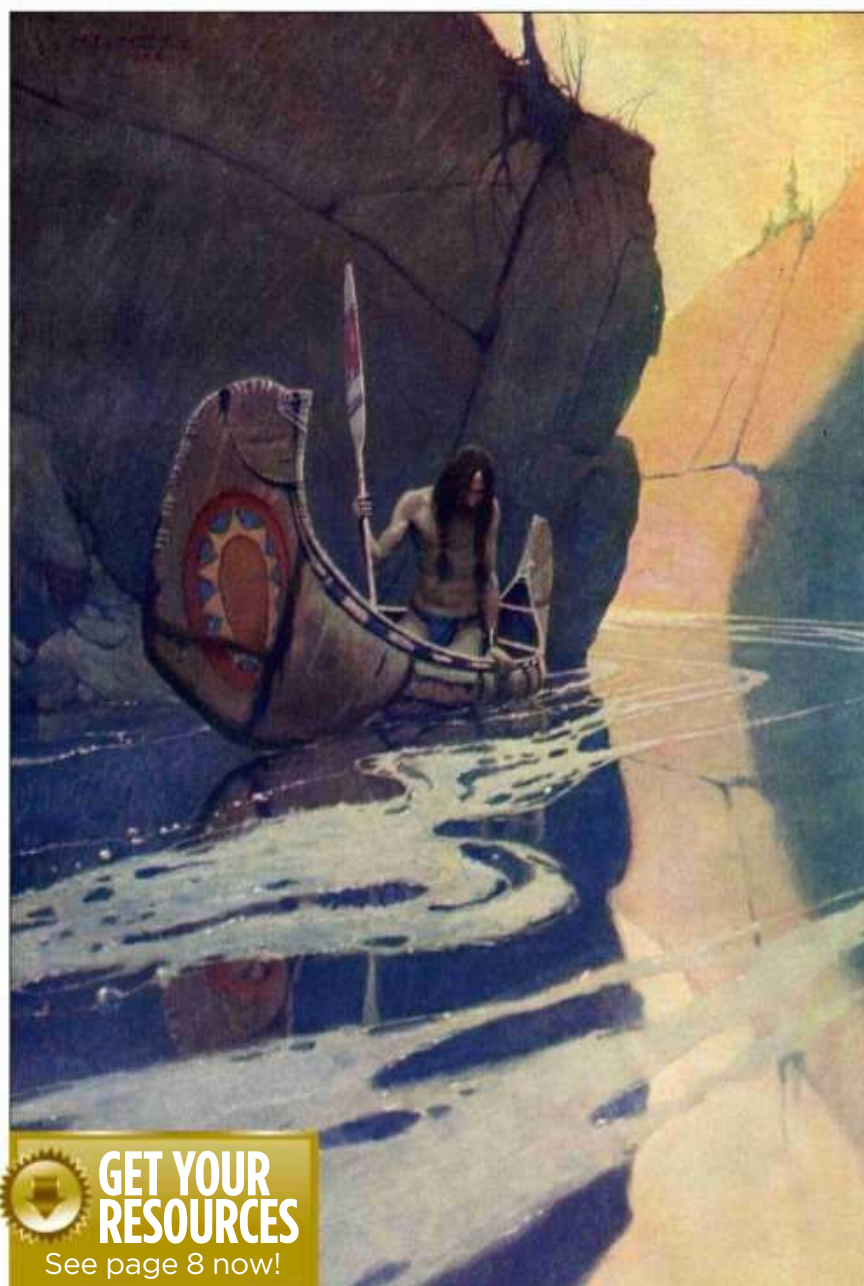
The great thing about master studies is that both amateur artists/illustrators and experienced industry-

working professionals can benefit from them. There's always something new to learn from the Old Masters, whether it's composition, lighting or even a storytelling technique.

What's most important while doing these is to be present; it's very easy to fall into a trap of just mindlessly copying. I made this mistake when I was starting out seven years ago. Ask as many questions as you can while studying from the image, such as: how is the composition designed;

why are the shapes arranged in this way; why did the Master use this group of values for this part of the image; or how did the artist draw your eye to the focal point.

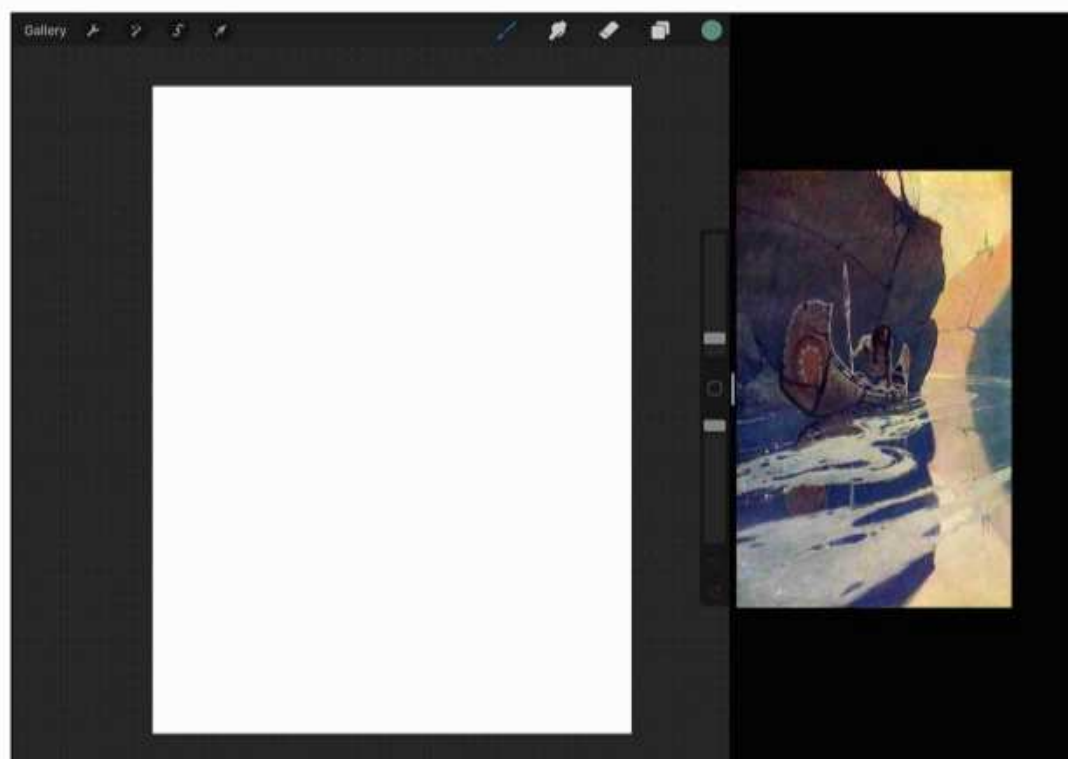
Studying the Masters is a great way to improve your skills. However, the real magic is when you apply a new trick or method that you learned from an old painting. By taking this new-found knowledge into your own imaginative work, you'll really find yourself growing quickly.



**GET YOUR  
RESOURCES**  
See page 8 now!

### 1 Choosing the right Master

I'd suggest looking for an artist from the past. One thing to be aware of when looking for versions of Master paintings online is that they're not all accurate to the original. Sometimes the colours might be off or the image isn't crisp. Do your research to find the best one before committing to an image. I've chosen the image Painting of Native American (see left) from one of my favourite artists, NC Wyeth.



### 2 Setting up Procreate

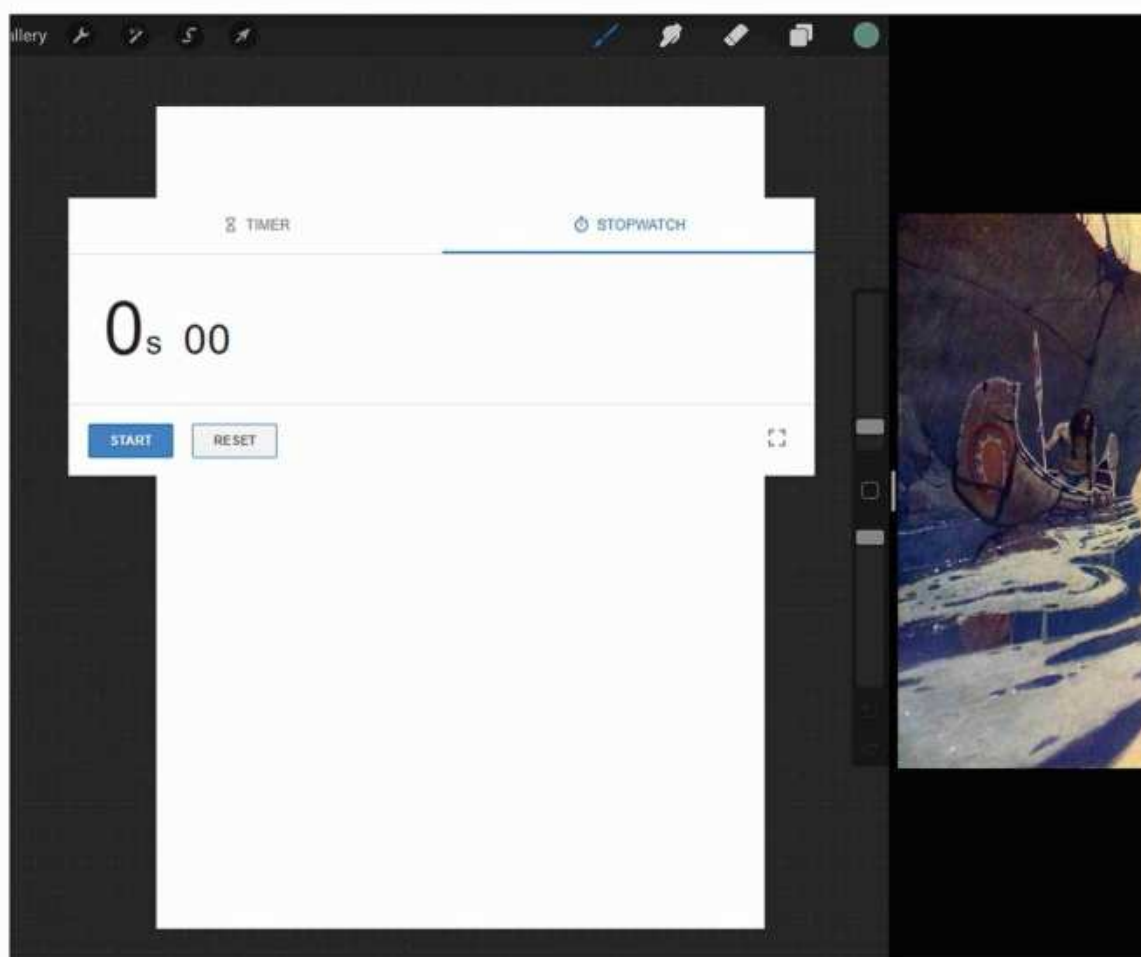
I use the split screen function on the iPad when doing these studies, putting the study image on the Image Viewer on the right-hand side of the screen as I'm left handed. You'll also need a couple of different versions of the image in your viewer: one flipped horizontally and another in greyscale. ➡



In depth Study the greats







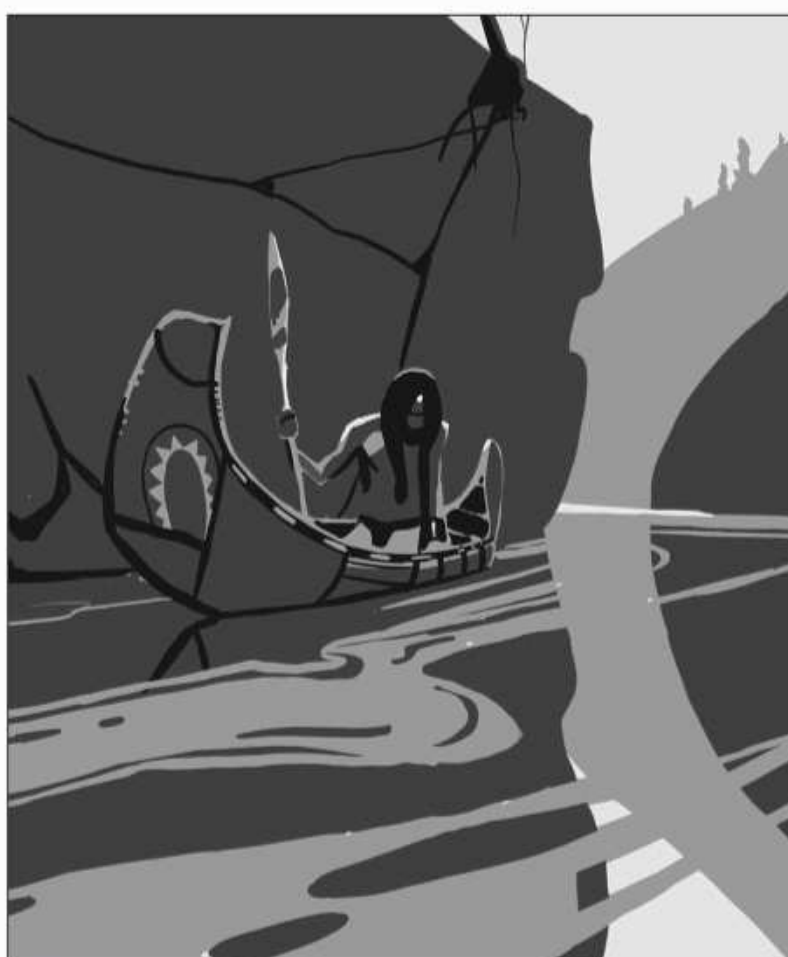
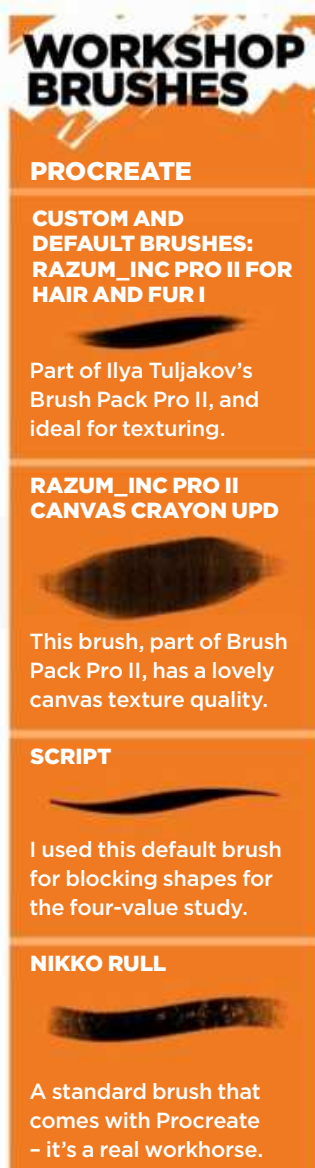
## 3 Setting a time limit

It's important to limit your time when doing these studies, because it's easy to fall into the trap of rendering too many details. If you're new to this approach then give yourself maybe 20-40 minutes for the value study (explained in step five) and between one and three hours for the full study, whatever you feel comfortable with.



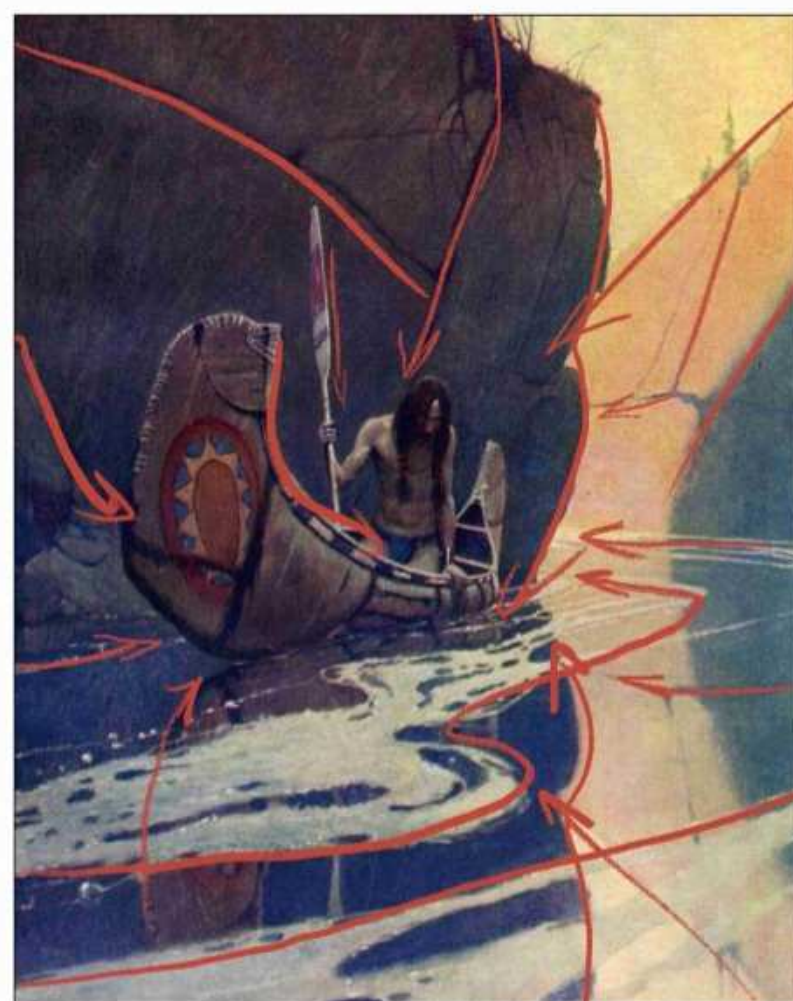
## 4 Creating a rough sketch

Sometimes I'll start my studies by roughing in a guideline sketch or doing a cleaner sketch. In this case I'm just going to do a rough sketch to suggest the placement of the shapes. This will evolve over the course of the study, but for now just rough in your lines.



## 5 Four-value structure study

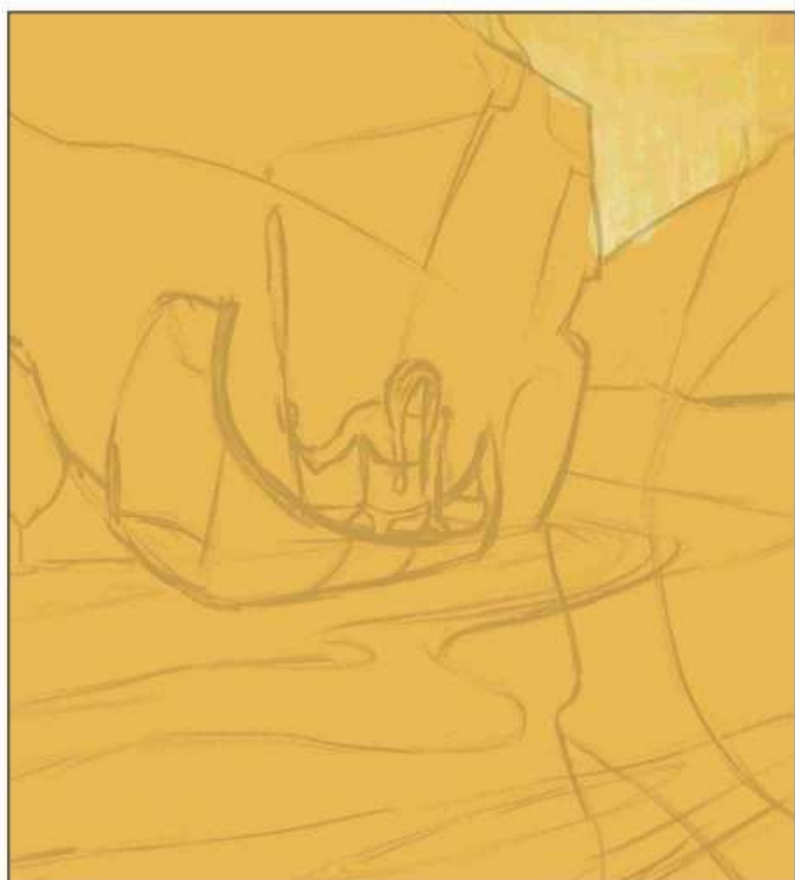
On the Value slider in Procreate I'm going to choose 10, 25, 60 and 90 per cent and only work with these four values. This will enable us to see how the shapes of the composition are arranged through simple values. Sometimes the values in the image might not match one of the four values we have, so we need to choose a group to place them into. Squinting your eyes can help with this.



## 6 Analysing the image

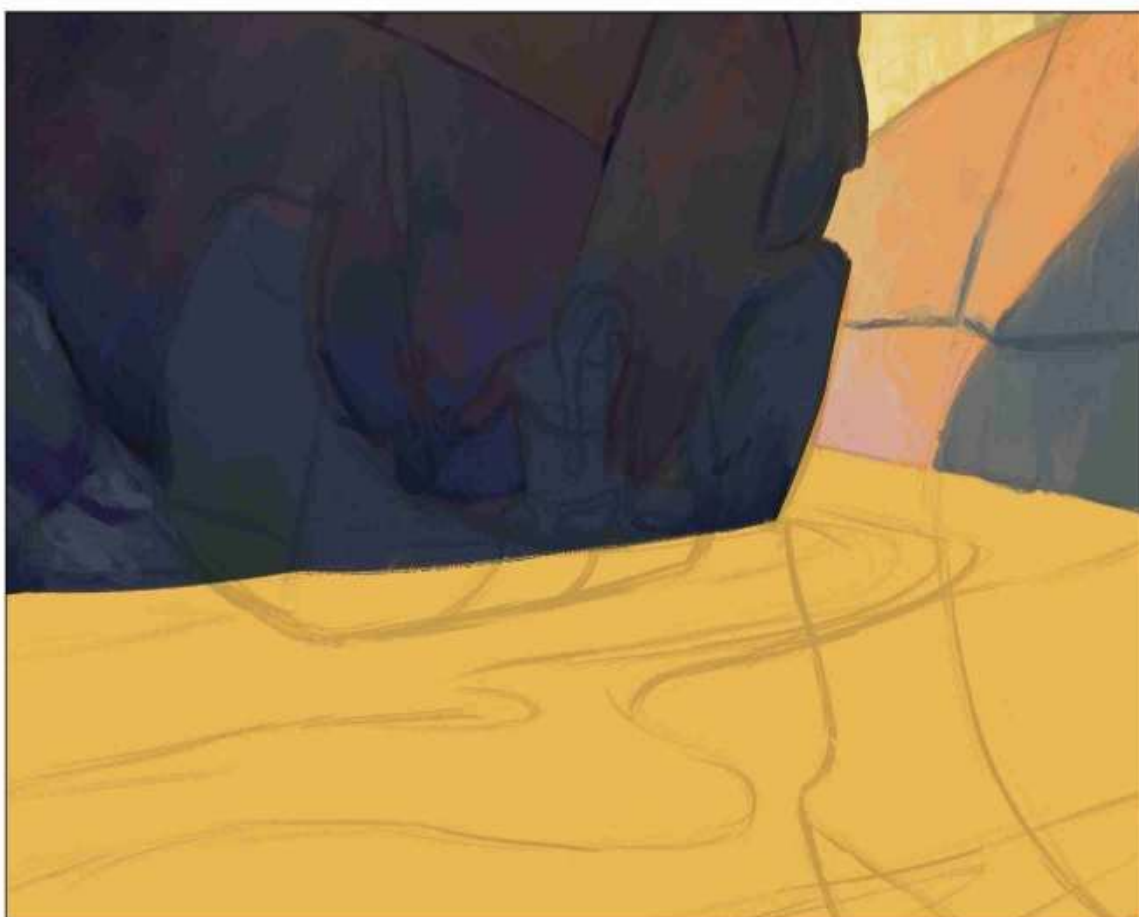
It can be useful to drag your Color Picker around the image before starting the full colour study. This will give you an idea of where the colours fall on the colour wheel. I also look at how the composition is arranged. Look closely – almost every line in the image has been designed to bring our eye into the focal point (the man).





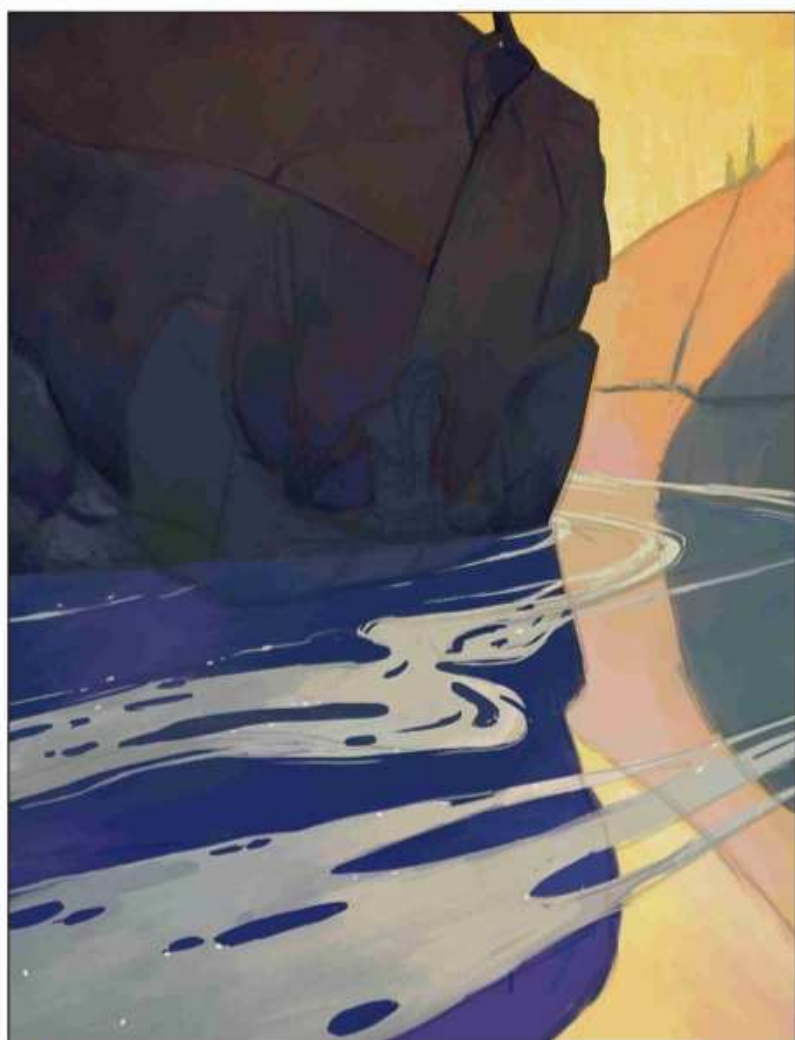
## 7 Blocking in the background

I break the image down as much as possible and generally work from the background to the foreground. I'll use different layers for the major elements of the image. I use the Fill Layer option to quickly get rid of the white canvas. I'll now search for the sky colours without using the Color Picker, to test my eye.



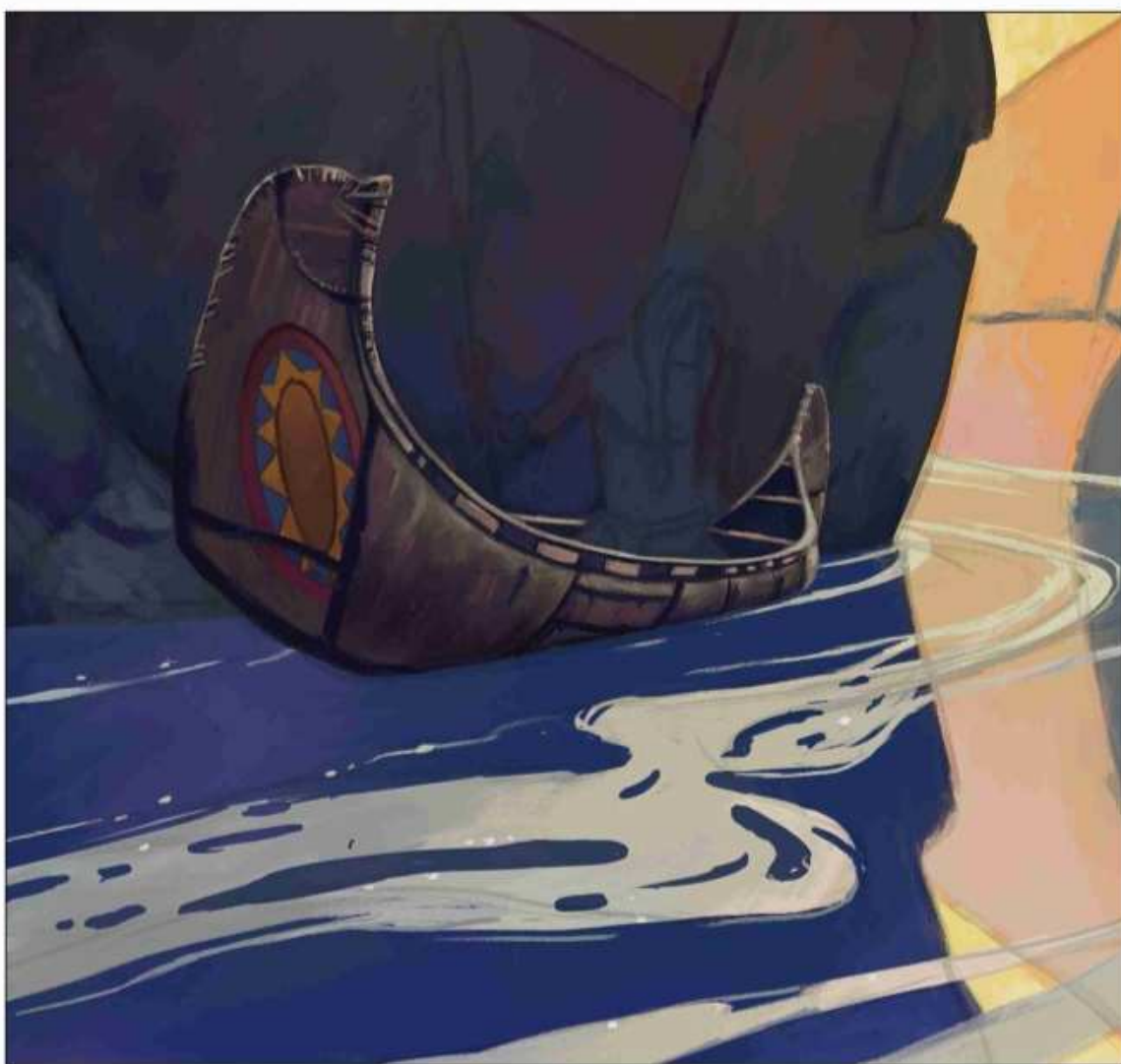
## 8 Working in the rocks

Now I start with the warm background rock, which is half in shadow. Wyeth has used these desaturated oranges for the bottom of the rock that appear near-pink. This is due to the colour relativity. Colours can appear different depending on the other colours that surround them. I continue with the rock areas in shadow, paying close attention to all the subtle shifts in hue.



## 9 Simplifying the water

After I block in the shapes, I will alpha lock each layer (Select layer>Alpha lock); this way I know I can do broad strokes that will stay confined to the blocked shape. I repeat the same process for the foam on top; I push, pull and erase parts of the shape until I'm happy with it.



## 10 Adding the boat

Once I've blocked in the shape, I'll Alpha Lock the layer and start building up the details. I start by finding the base colours of the boat, which turn out to be these desaturated pinks/purples. I slowly add the decals and other details, using the main shapes of the boat as a guideline for the placement of details. ➡➡

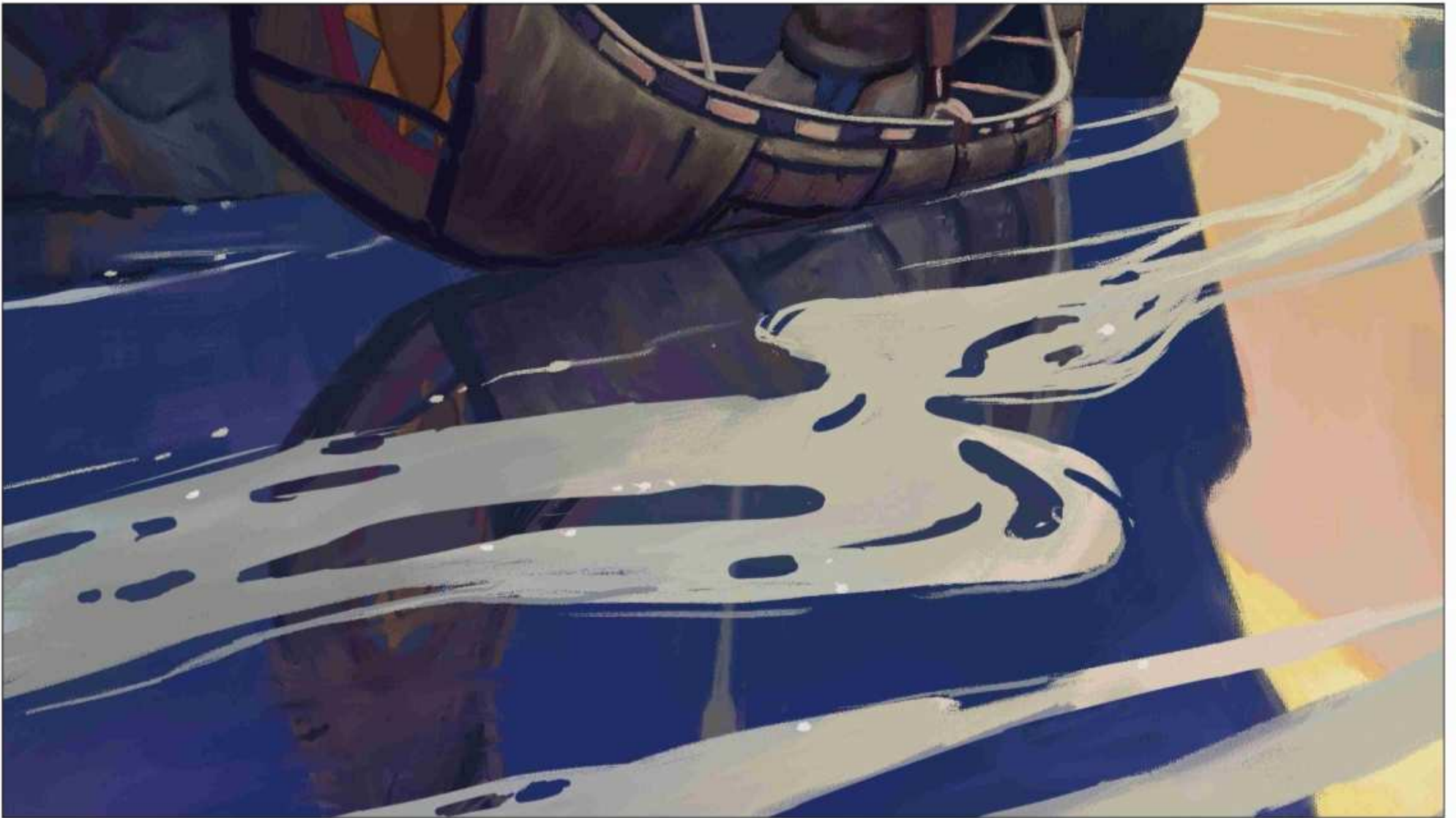




## 11 Bringing in the lone character

When approaching the figure I'll build upon my first sketch; it wasn't that accurate and I need to recheck the proportions. I'll use the boat as a guideline for where certain parts of the character fall. I block in the body starting with the head, then hitting the chest, pants, hands and the oar.





## 12 Analysing the progress

I'll often flip the image horizontally every few minutes or even vertically to give my eyes a fresh look. You'll often see mistakes almost jump off the page when doing this. There's a few small details such as the boat reflection to paint. I select my boat layer and tap Duplicate>Flip Vertical. I place this underneath my foam layer, reduce the Opacity and then distort it into place.



## 13 Finalising the study

When you find yourself getting caught up in tertiary details, especially outside the focal point, it's a good sign that you should move on. However, I'm going to unify a couple more things around the image; the edges on the foam are way too harsh in places. I'm going to use my Smudge brush and gently soften the edges.



## 14 Making final adjustments

At the end of my studies I normally make the image slightly brighter and add a subtle Sharpen filter just to crisp things up a little bit (tap Adjustments>Sharpen>20 per cent). You can also play with the colour balance, such as adding some very slight blues to the shadows and warms to the light. And that's me done. Hopefully you've found this workshop useful. Good luck on your artistic journey! 🍌



Next month

Create engaging  
and unique  
portraits with  
expert advice from  
Mel Milton.





Next month in...  
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

# Improve your characters!

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## **ArtRage workshop**

Portrait artist Phil Galloway paints a figure with texture and movement.

## **Four-colour value test**

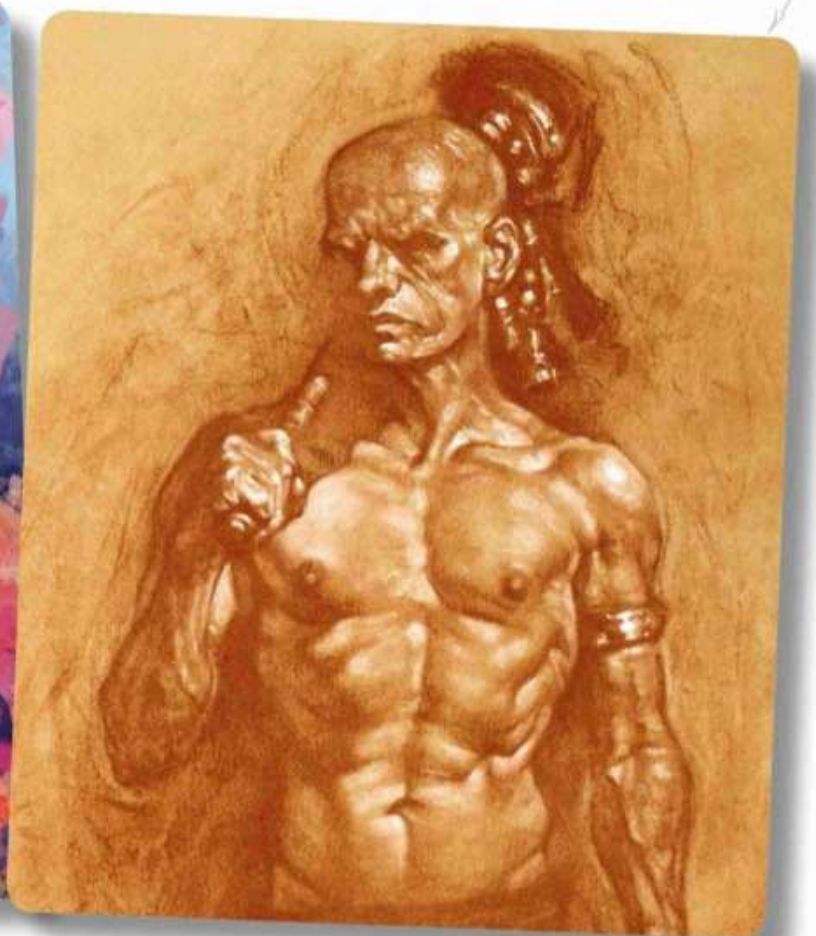
How to create and define shapes in your painting, with Min Yum.

## **Svetlin Velinov interview**

The artist on how he never misses a beat with his Magic illustrations.

## **Figure drawing part two**

Patrick J Jones continues his series with advice on how to draw males.



**ISSUE 168 ON SALE IN THE UK 2 November 2018**



## Part 2: 3D tools

# TURN 2D ART INTO A GAME ASSET

Following on from last month's workshop, **Baj Singh** creates a 3D game-ready character from a 2D concept



### Artist PROFILE

**Baj Singh**

LOCATION: England

Baj is the lead character artist for the Total War: Warhammer franchise at Creative Assembly in Horsham, England. <https://ifxm.ag/baj-s>

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While the software used may differ between companies, translating a 2D concept into a 3D asset that can be used within a video game is a ubiquitous process in AAA game development. My goal for this workshop is to help you understand what programs and processes we use to get to the final result.

A basic knowledge or awareness of these programs will help, although

I'll be focusing less on software-specific elements and instead looking at the overall process. However, for those interested in 3D game character production as a career, further research into development processes will be necessary. See page 18 for this month's feature on online art schools, and find out what video game courses teach their students. You're sure to find the software I've mentioned here, along with alternative programs, too.

I'll talk about the process of building and sculpting a high-resolution character using 3D Studio Max and ZBrush. This will never be used in the final game, but will provide additional texture detail to the low (game) resolution character (which I also create in 3ds Max). I then use Photoshop and Quixel Suite to add colour and texture to the asset, before posing the character and presenting it using Marmoset Toolbag. So, there's a lot to cover!

Cast-iron material (similar to what you might find on an iron cooking pot) has low reflectivity and gloss.

Brass that's grimy with some oxidisation.

Matted and coarse fur.

I'll be covering this leg scar with fur, because keeping the rear legs symmetrical will improve texture space efficiency.

Leg armour on the sides doesn't have to be unique on all four legs. I'll consider reusing one or two pieces across the character.



### 1 Breaking down the concept

Before starting production, I take Rinehart Appiah's initial concept for the creature and start breaking it down, thinking about what real-life materials can be referenced (leather, iron and so on), as well as which parts of the character can be symmetrical. This is important because thinking about symmetry early saves you time later on. If you can't see both sides of assets at the same time in-game, I tend to make them symmetrical to improve efficiency. ➡

### RESOURCES WORKSHOP BRUSHES

#### ZBRUSH

##### CUSTOM BRUSHES: METAL\_DENTS01.ZBP

Ideal for adding dents and scratches to metal.

##### METAL\_NOISE01.ZBP

Apply noise to metallic surfaces with this brush.

##### IM\_RIVOTS01.ZBP

Used to add rivet geometry to armour.

##### IM\_SKULL01

This brush adds floating skulls to geometry.



**MISSED  
PART 1?**

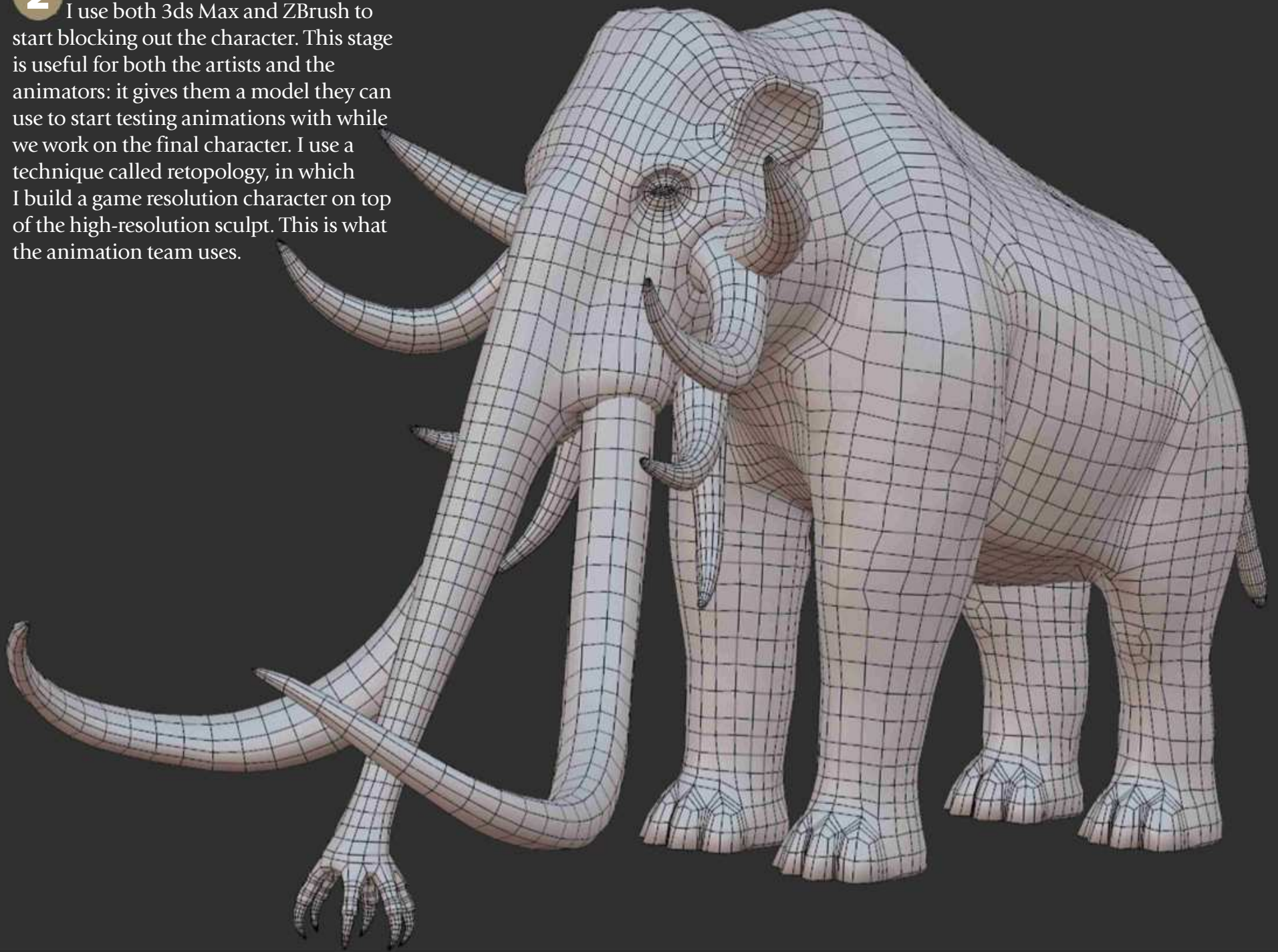
Turn to **page 52**  
to get hold of  
issue 166.



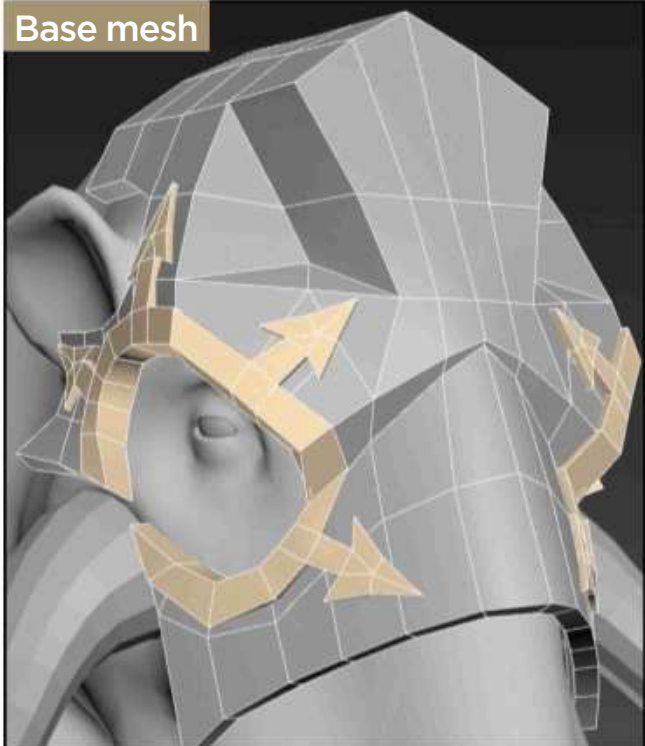


## 2 Block out the character

I use both 3ds Max and ZBrush to start blocking out the character. This stage is useful for both the artists and the animators: it gives them a model they can use to start testing animations with while we work on the final character. I use a technique called retopology, in which I build a game resolution character on top of the high-resolution sculpt. This is what the animation team uses.



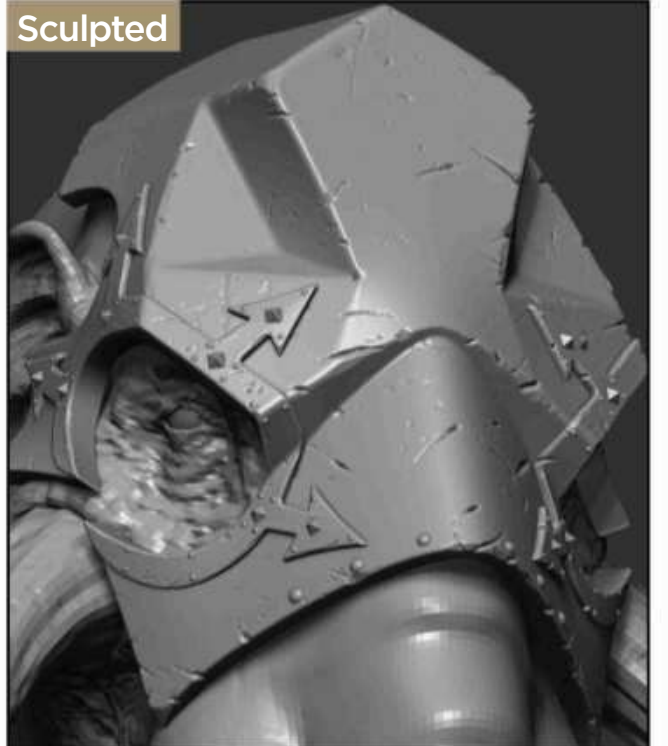
Base mesh



Subdivided



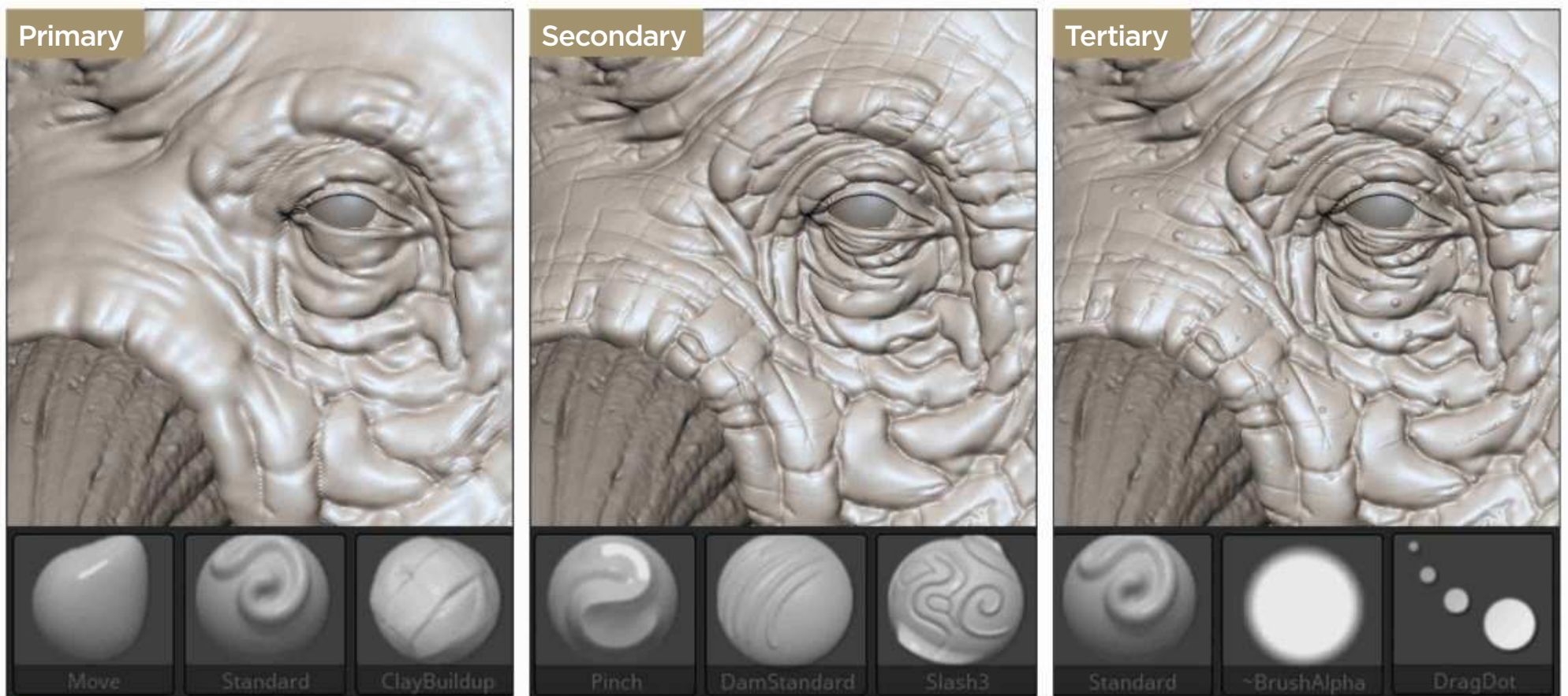
Sculpted



## 3 High resolution: depicting hard surfaces

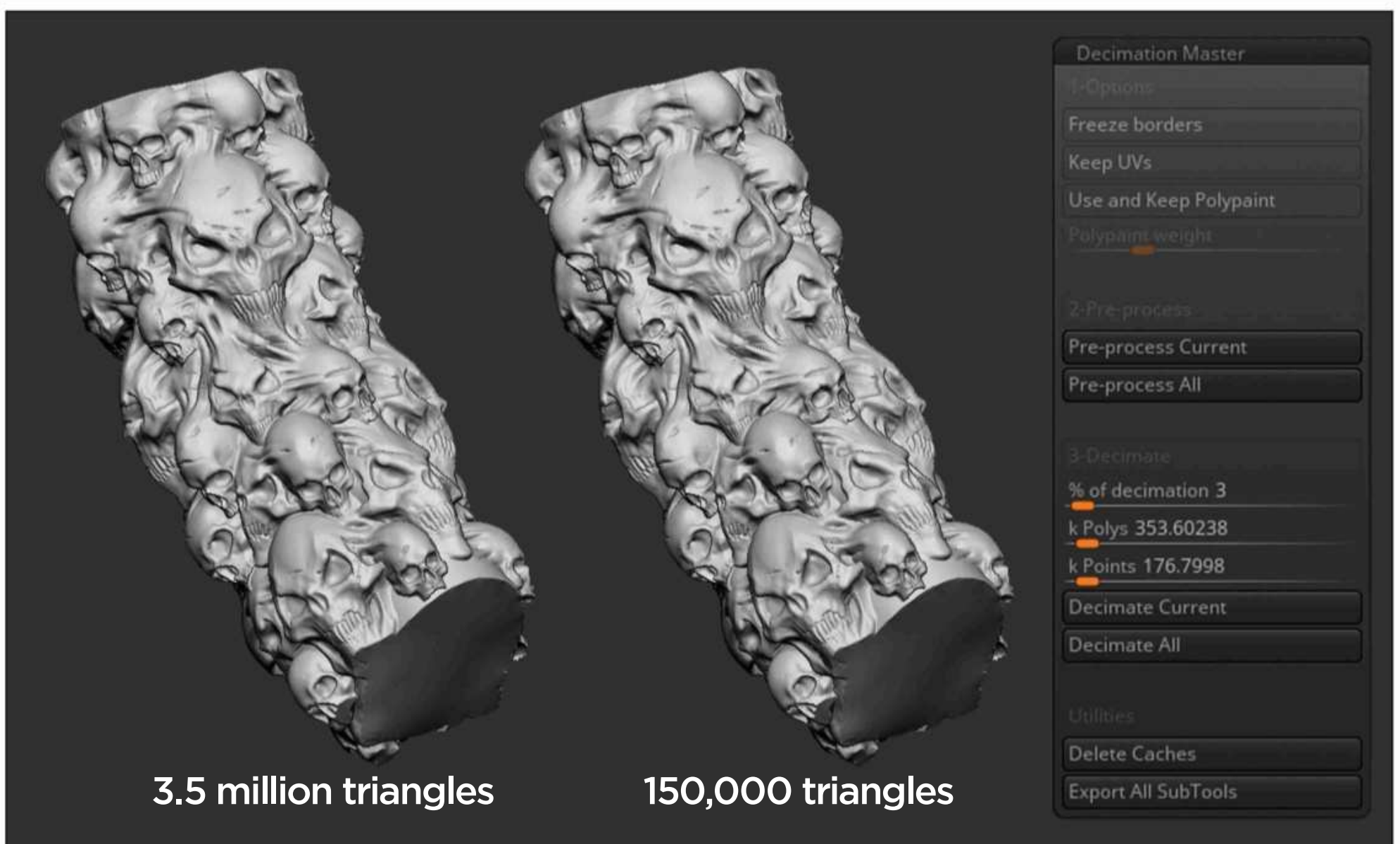
'Hard surface' defines mechanical pieces and armour that are faster to construct using traditional modelling techniques. There are many ways to do this, and I tend to use 3ds Max due to the level of control it offers. I start by blocking out the components using simple geometry before smoothing out the model using a method called 'subdivision'. I then take these meshes into ZBrush and sculpt in wear-and-tear detail.





## 4 High resolution: sculpting the mammoth's skin

This is where I use ZBrush to detail the high-resolution character. This process can be broken down into three creative steps: primary silhouette; secondary forms; and tertiary detail. Initially, brushes such as Move, Standard and Clay Buildup help build up the initial form. Adding brushes such as Pinch and Dam Standard enable me to start looking at skin folds and surface transition, while brushes with custom alphas (pore and spots) give the beast that final level of polish.



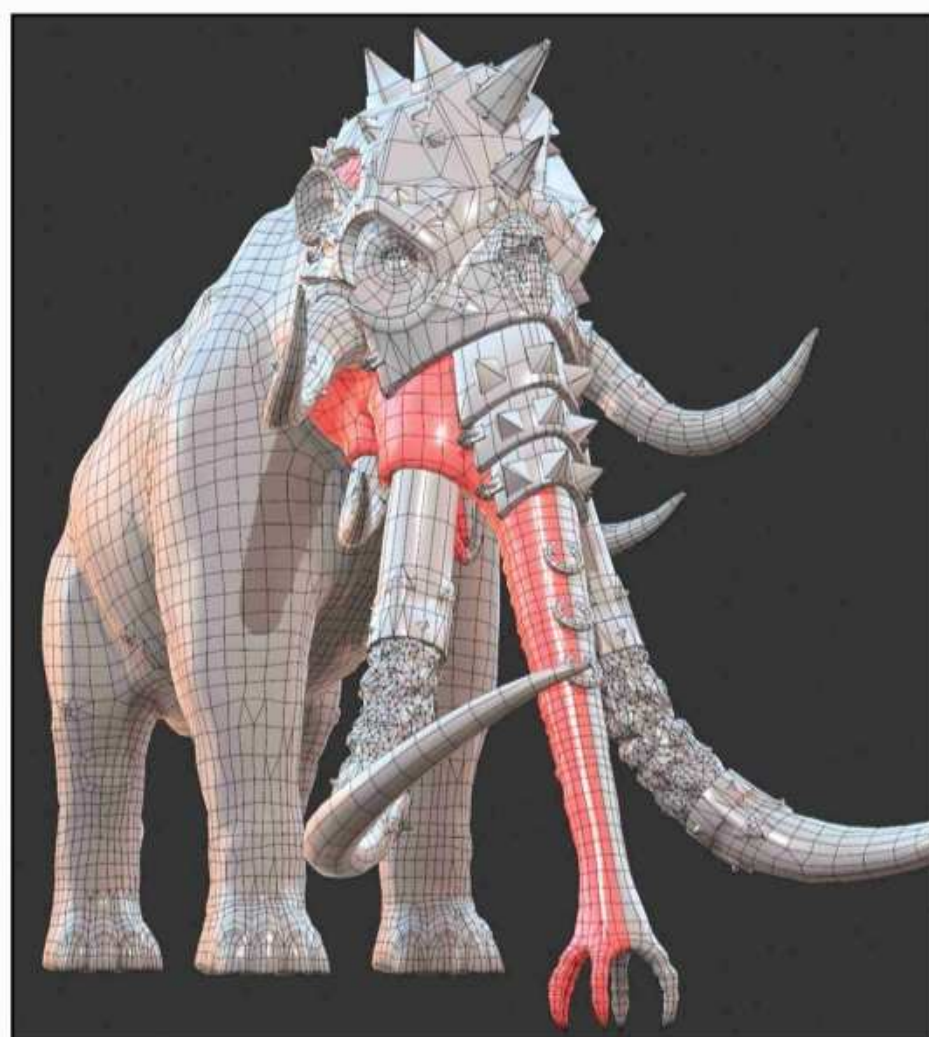
## 5 High Resolution: finalising the model

Once the sculpt is finished, I use a process in ZBrush called decimation to reduce the density of the high-resolution meshes without compromising quality. This will make retopology much smoother because 3ds Max has trouble handling high-density meshes. I then start merging geometry and assigning flat colours to components, based on what I want the final material to be when I start texturing. ➡➡



## 6 Game resolution: retopology

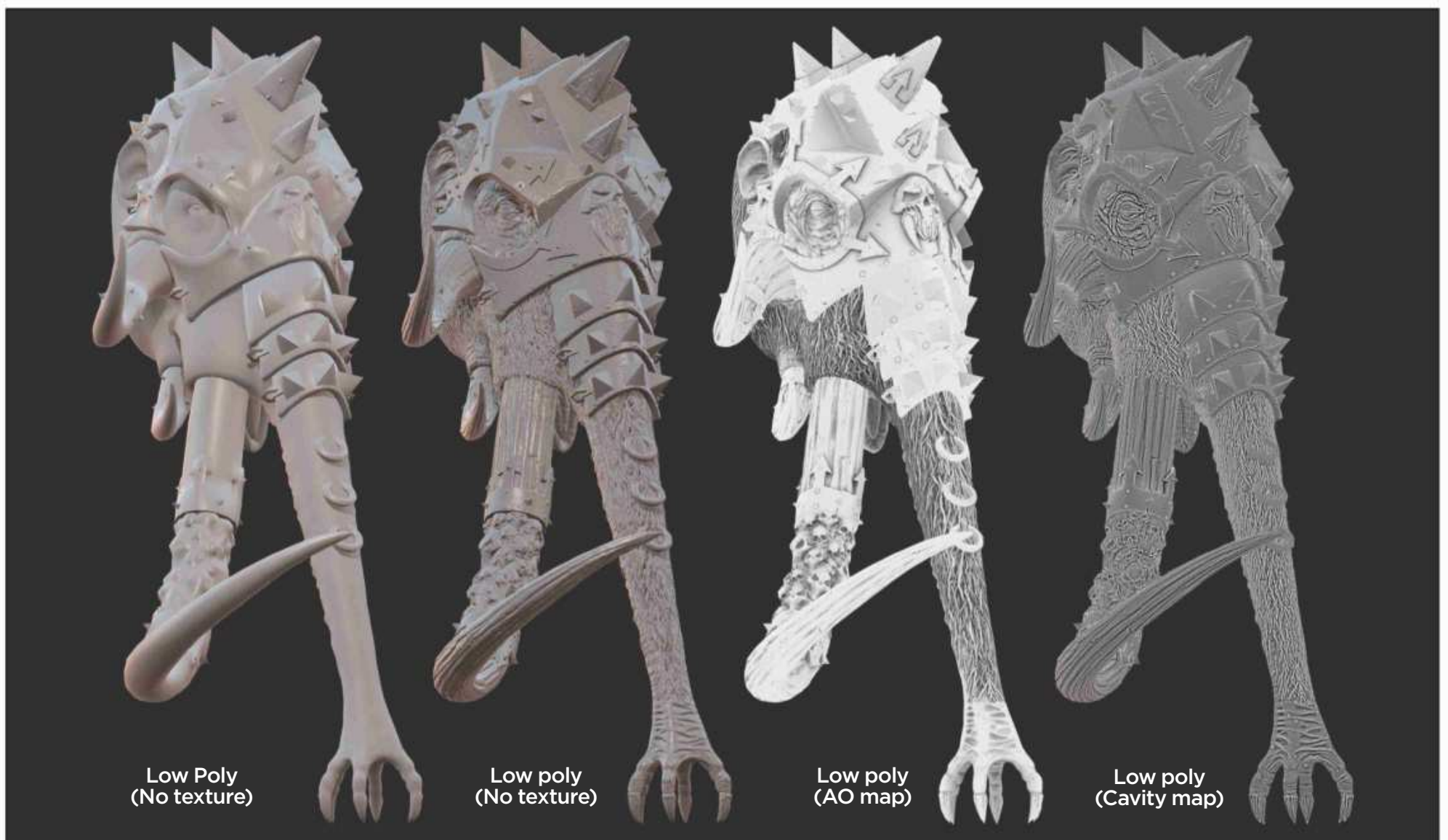
After importing the decimated meshes into 3ds Max, I use the Freeform toolset to start creating a final game-ready mesh. The important factors to take into account are retaining the silhouette of the high-resolution mesh while ensuring there's enough geometry to allow the character to deform correctly and stay within the triangle count limit (number of triangles is a common metric used to measure the density of a character).



## 7 Game resolution: UV unwrap

To texture an asset, we project a 2D image on to a 3D mesh. To aid with this, we use a process called UV unwrapping. A comparison to this would be papercraft: the UV unwrap would be the flattened version of the papercraft before it becomes a 3D model. I use 3ds Max to do this. Restraints to consider are texture resolution, where you maximise how much space your flattened UV takes up to enable more texture details.





## 8 Game resolution: baking

To give the illusion of the game resolution mesh looking like the sculpted character, we need to 'bake' the details down. This process creates multiple texture maps that all get used in the texturing stage (including a normal map where most of the detail comes from, and an ambient occlusion map that masks areas where ambient lighting wouldn't normally reach). I use Marmoset Toolbag for this stage.



## 9 Game resolution: hair cards

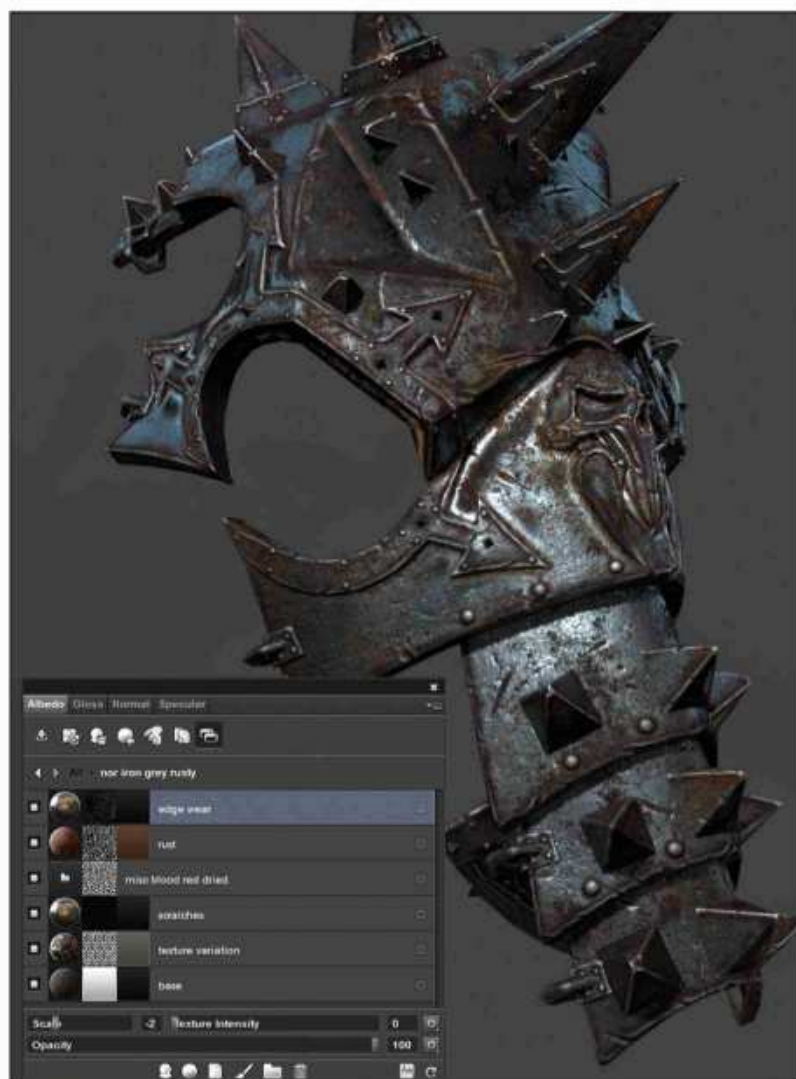
I use a 3D technique called hair card placement to give the impression of fur on the beast. Using mesh pieces made of very few triangles with transparency applied (alpha map), I place them around the character. I ensure that I leave spots where I don't want fur applied – scars and the underbelly, for example. I do this by creating chunks of fur, and then duplicating and placing them by hand in 3ds Max.



## 10 Texturing: Polypaint

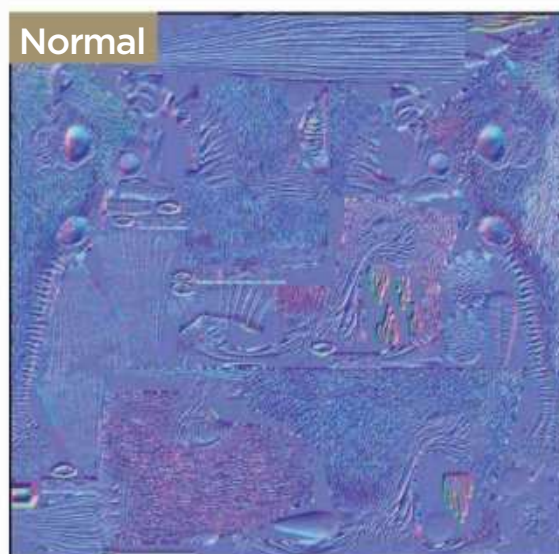
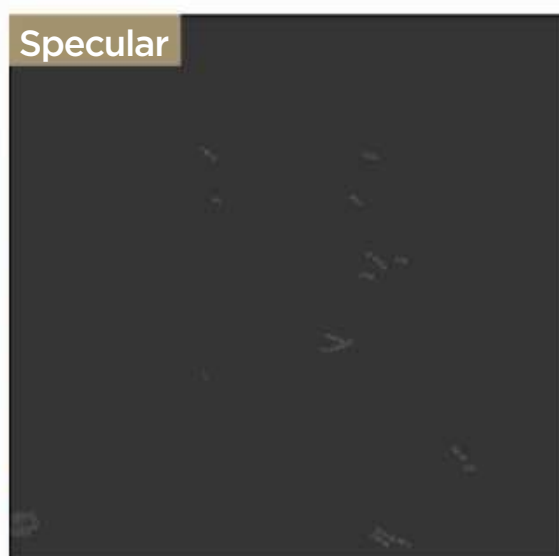
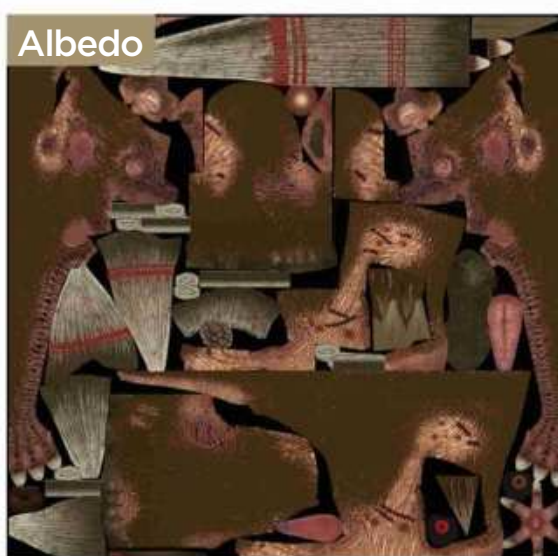
I use Polypaint in ZBrush to create a base texture for organic elements such as skin. This technique enables me to paint on to the high-resolution mesh in 3D space (painting on to your mesh in Photoshop can cause texture seams where your UV sections are split. The polypaint will get baked down to the low-resolution mesh using Marmoset Toolbag and will be authored further as part of the texturing workflow. ➡





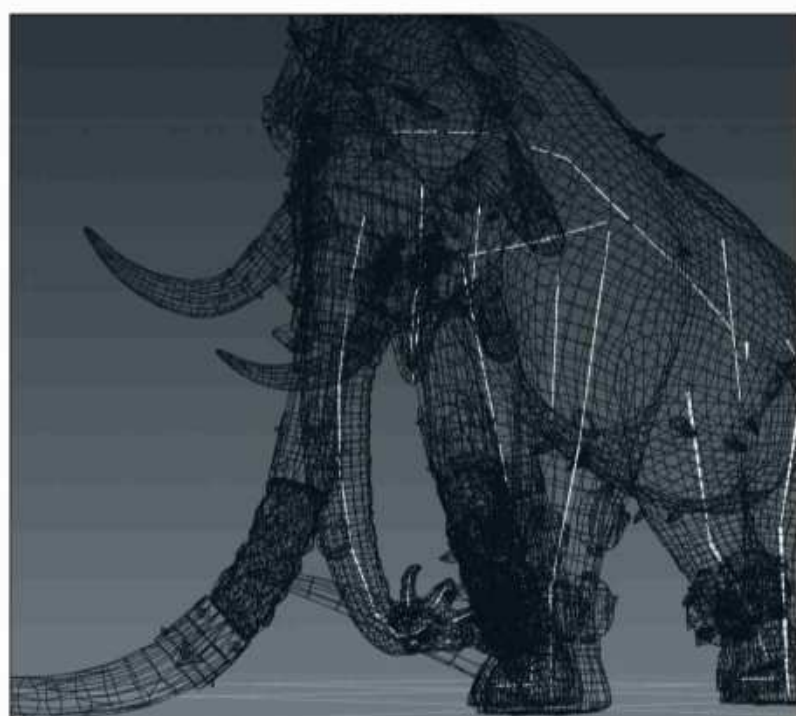
## 11 Texturing: into Quixel Suite

For a lot of the texturing, I use a program called Quixel Suite. Each material on the creature has its own properties (for example, how glossy a material is and whether the material is metal or not) and this program enables you to produce materials with correct real-world values (this is called Physically Based Rendering). Substance Painter does a similar job.



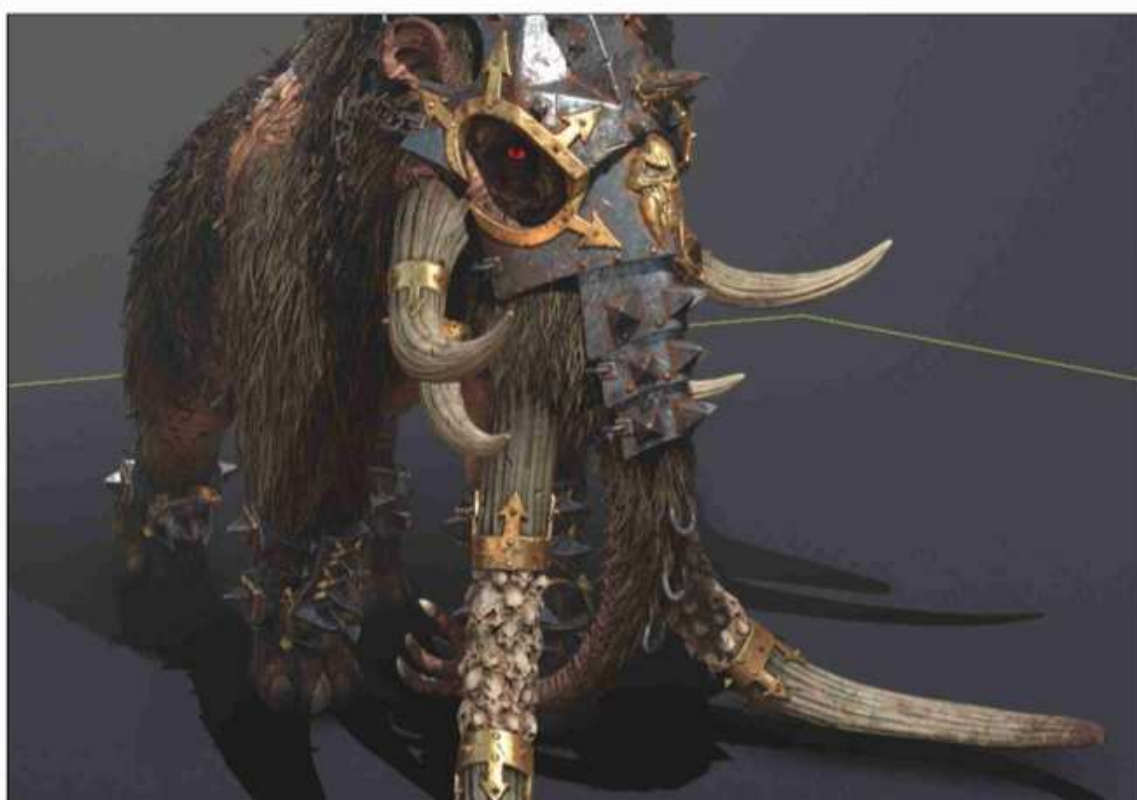
## 12 Texturing: Photoshop

Once the base textures have been finalised, I collate them all into a single Photoshop file, splitting up my material groups to keep everything organised. Any final tweaks are made here (additional grunge, wear and tear, and so on) before the textures are exported as .tga files. The most commonly used textures are albedo (material colour information), gloss (how glossy a material is), specular (whether a material is non-metal and if not what type of metal it is) and normal map.



## 13 Low resolution: posing the model

Creating a complicated posing rig is a skill in its own right, so to simplify the process I use the Bones toolset in 3ds Max. This enables me to quickly create a posable skeleton for moving my creature's joints. However, this doesn't always give the cleanest result, so I take the posed mesh into ZBrush to quickly clean up any problematic geometry using the Sculpting toolset.



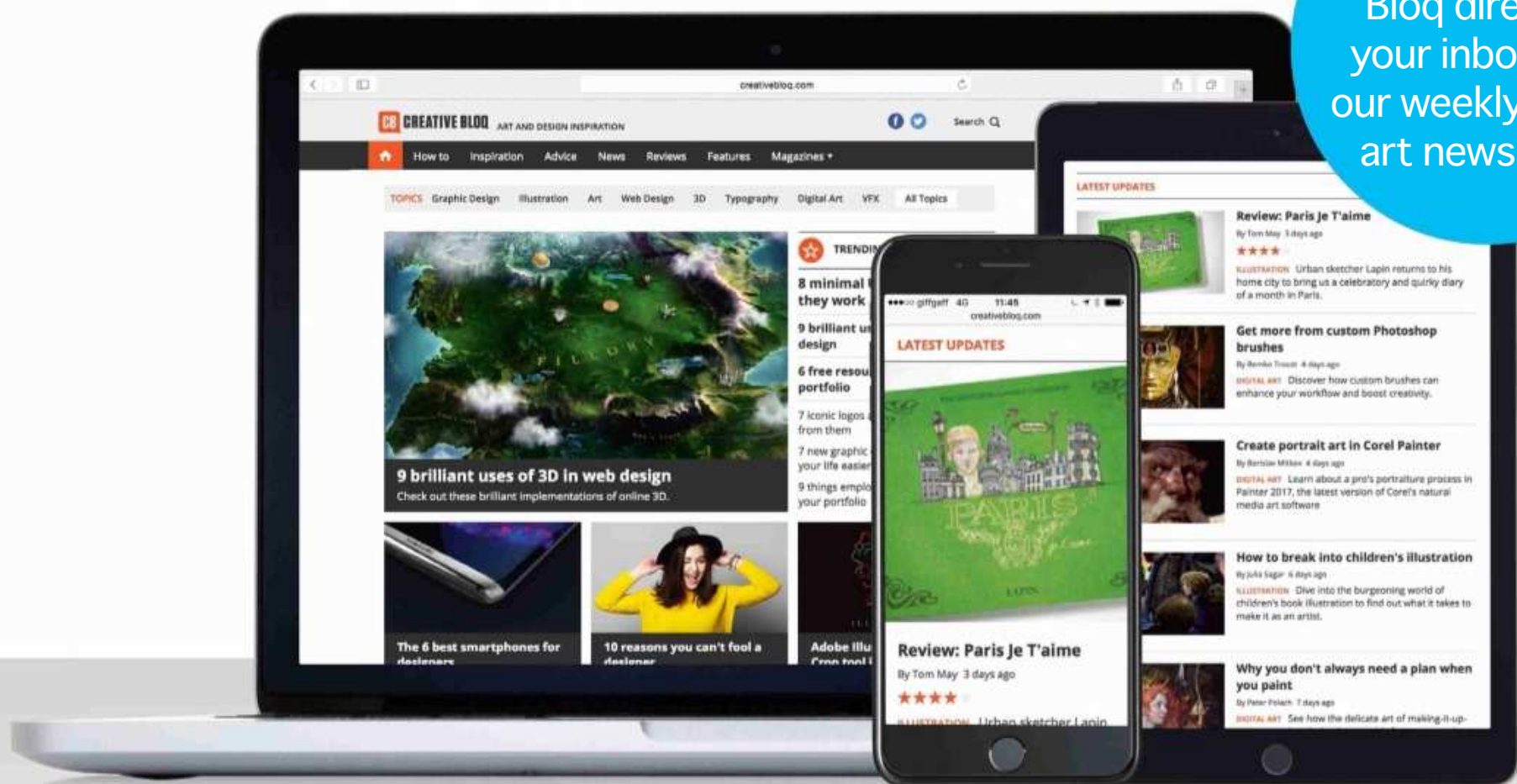
## 14 Low resolution: final presentation stage

Finally, I take the character into Marmoset Toolbag. Here, I can create a nicely lit scene and use a number of post effects/tweaks to help present it in its best light. I can also use the software to create a 360 degree turntable video, as well as export a portable version of the scene so that people can rotate around the model themselves, and see how it was constructed.



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## Photoshop

# CREATE STRONG COLOUR CONTRAST



Follow keyframe artist **Ricardo Guimaraes** as he develops a sci-fi illustration that employs contrasts in colours to boost its visual impact

### Artist PROFILE

**Ricardo Guimaraes**  
LOCATION: US

Ricardo is a keyframe illustrator with over 15 years' experience in the entertainment industry. He's also an Academic Specialist at Michigan State University.  
[www.rgillustration.com](http://www.rgillustration.com)

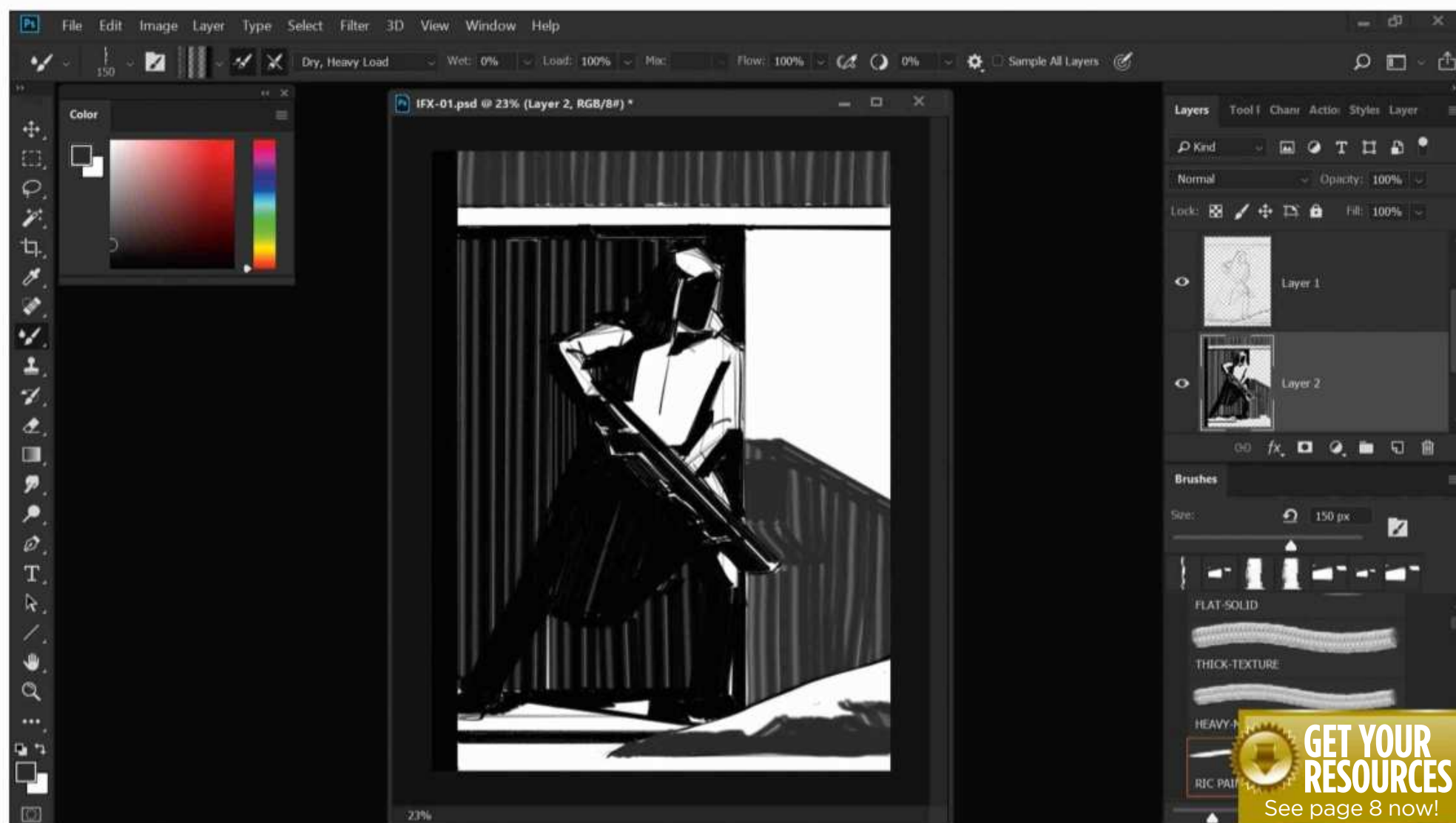


Working with colours is one of the most difficult tasks for the digital painter nowadays. Primarily because all the colours of the spectrum are readily available in the Color picker, and the temptation is usually to go for the brighter ones and use too much colour. Harmonising them then becomes a nightmare and the end result often feels disconnected.

But what if we do want to use bright and contrasting colours? Fortunately, there are ways to use these colours together. In this workshop I'll demonstrate how to create an image with vivid colours and how to integrate them to create a strong composition. After creating our compositional sketch, we'll establish our strongest colour statements in our colour sketch, then expand our colour range in a logical manner and keep our focus at the

colour contrasts and choices. We'll then create the actual illustration using a mixture of painting techniques and photobashing.

We'll use mainly Photoshop's Mixer Brush Tool, which can create textures without too much effort. By the end of this workshop you'll have more confidence to work with stronger colours in your imagery and will know how to make smart decisions to harmonise whichever colour scheme come to mind.

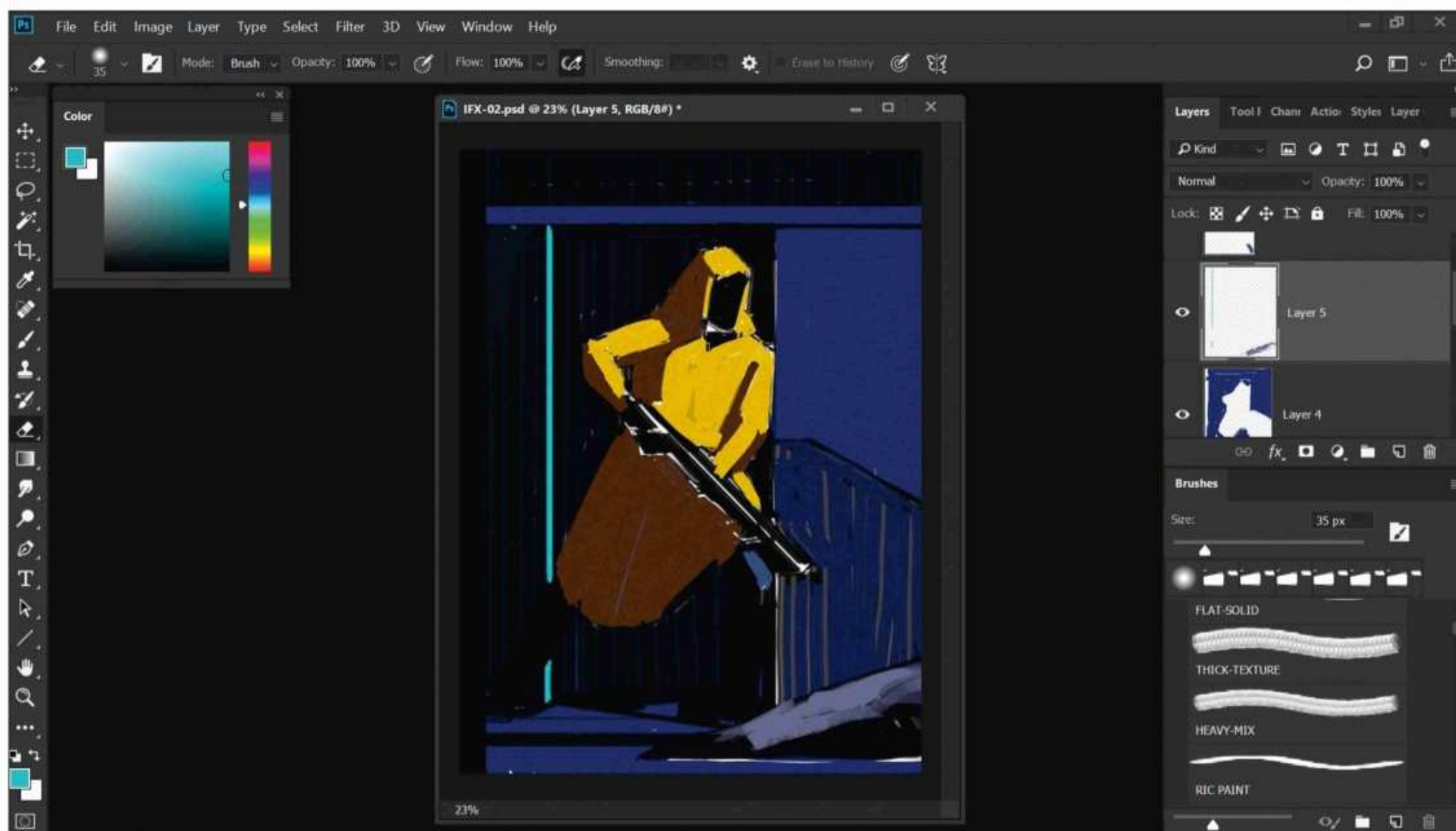


### 1 Create a sketch of the composition

This is actually the backbone of your composition(s) and if you skip this step, things will become much more difficult later on, as there's little room for guesswork. Here I begin with a few basic shapes, trying to establish the graphic nature of my composition early on. The simpler and more separated out the elements, the better at this stage, because afterwards the reading of the composition will be based on this. ➡

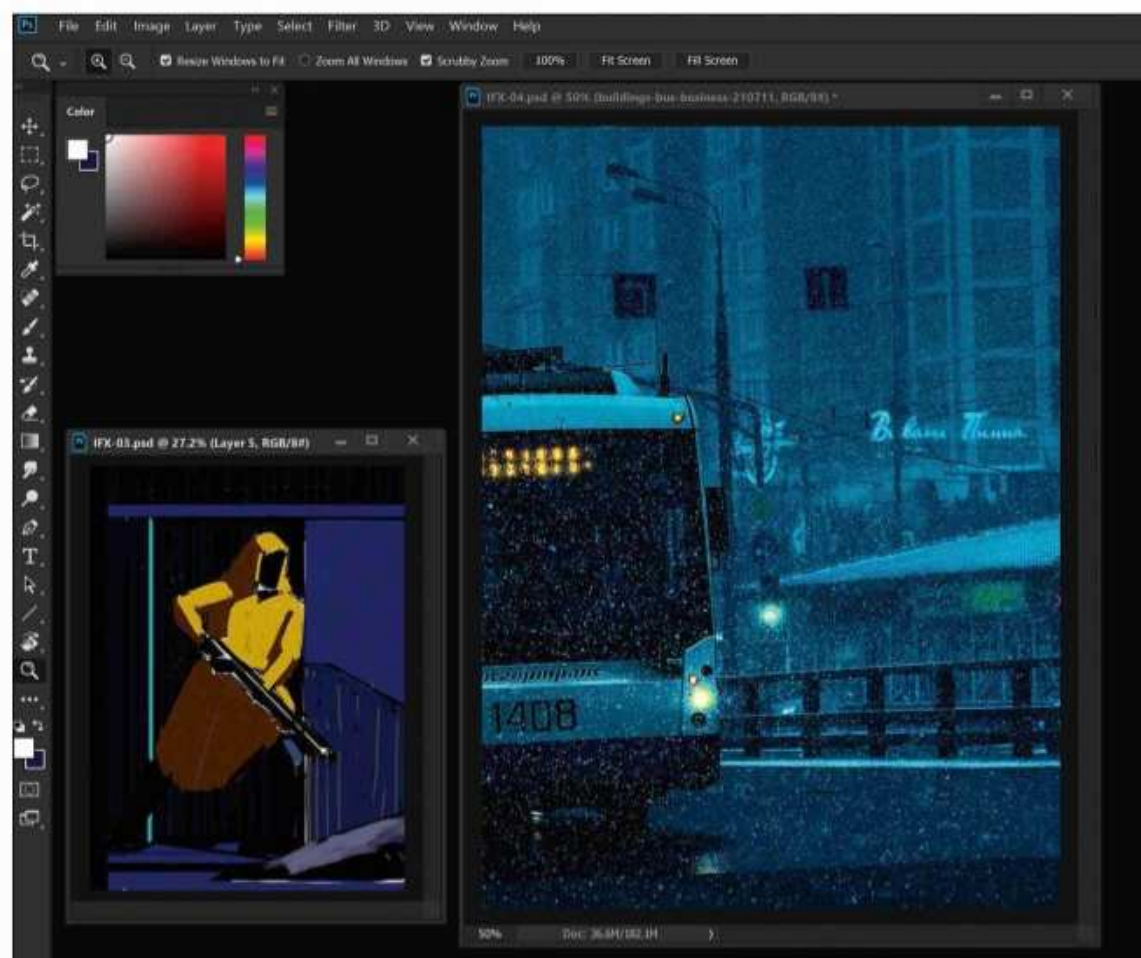


# Workshops



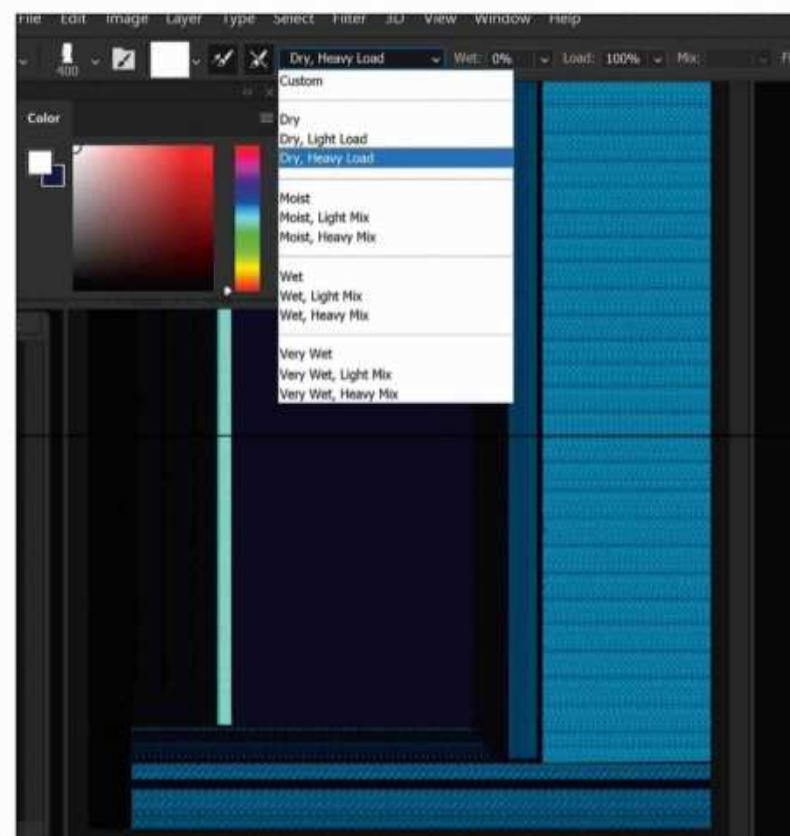
## 2 Time to develop the colour comp

At this stage I begin establishing my stronger statements and colour contrasts. I decide early on that warm yellow will be my main, purest colour and as a contrasting colour I go straight with the blues/purples for the environment. The trick here is to make these colours slightly less vibrant. Notice how I keep the purest and more vibrant colours for the areas of light in my image.



## 3 Setting up the environment

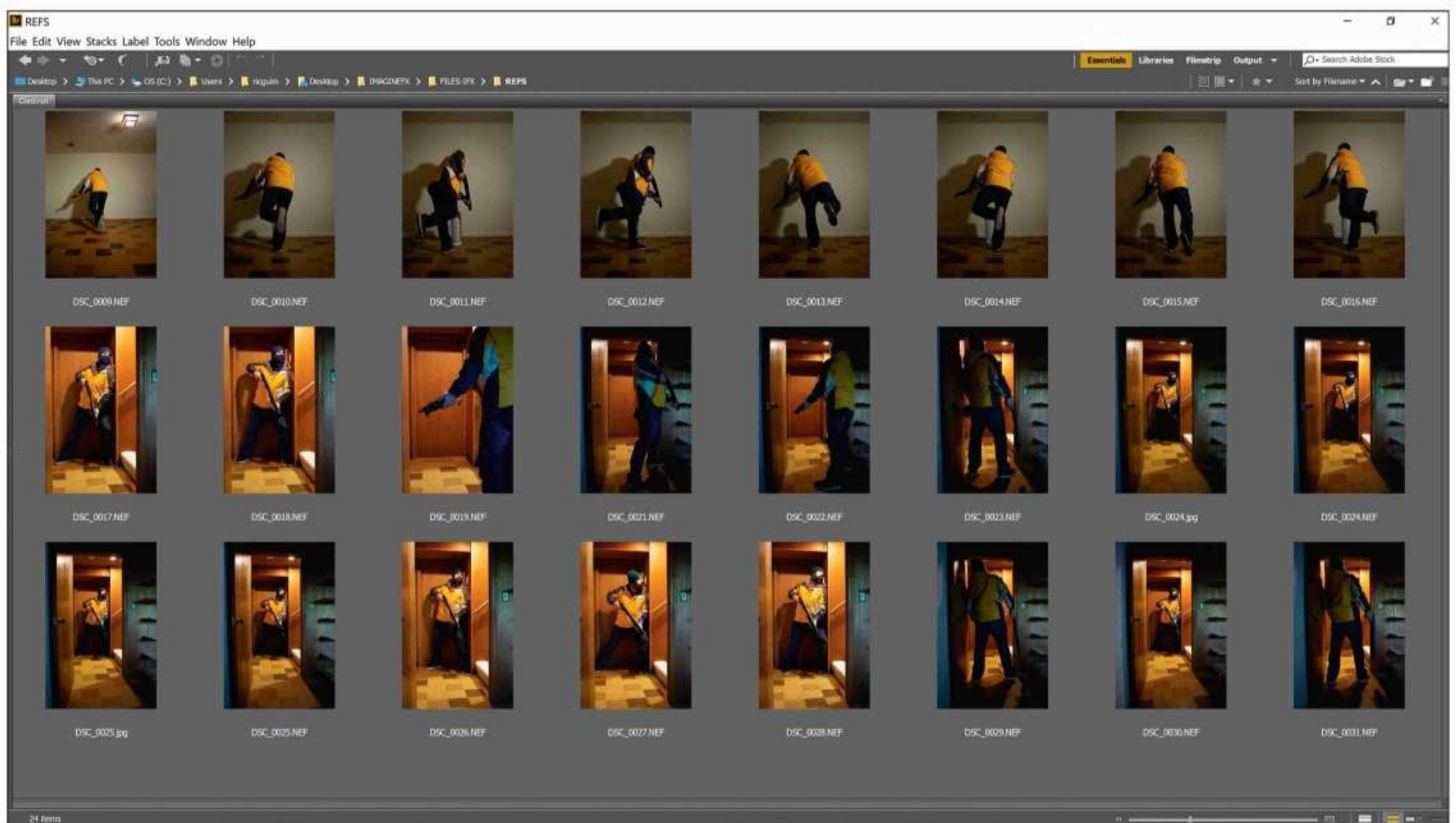
I begin establishing the environment, because whatever goes into it will be influenced by its light and colours. I start by placing an image I found online that has the colour scheme I need. Usually I'll crop and distort such images as I see fit, until I find a good chunk that reflects the colours I'm looking for.



## 4 Paint with the Mixer Brush

I choose the Mixer Brush tool (found under the Brush tool) and use the Dry, Heavy Load setting. I start by sampling colours from the image I've chosen and begin painting to create my environment. For more dynamic painting textures, I uncheck Load Solid Colors Only, which means now I can select portions of the photo and paint with that.





## 5 Put together some reference photography

Once I have the pose for my character established, I carry out a photo session using myself as the model. I try to match the light direction as closely as I can and if possible, the colours that I plan to use in the composition. Luckily, I have a yellow jacket lurking in my wardrobe that I can use as a basis for the outfit of my character, and I use a BB gun as a placeholder for the futuristic rifle.



## 6 Painting the figure

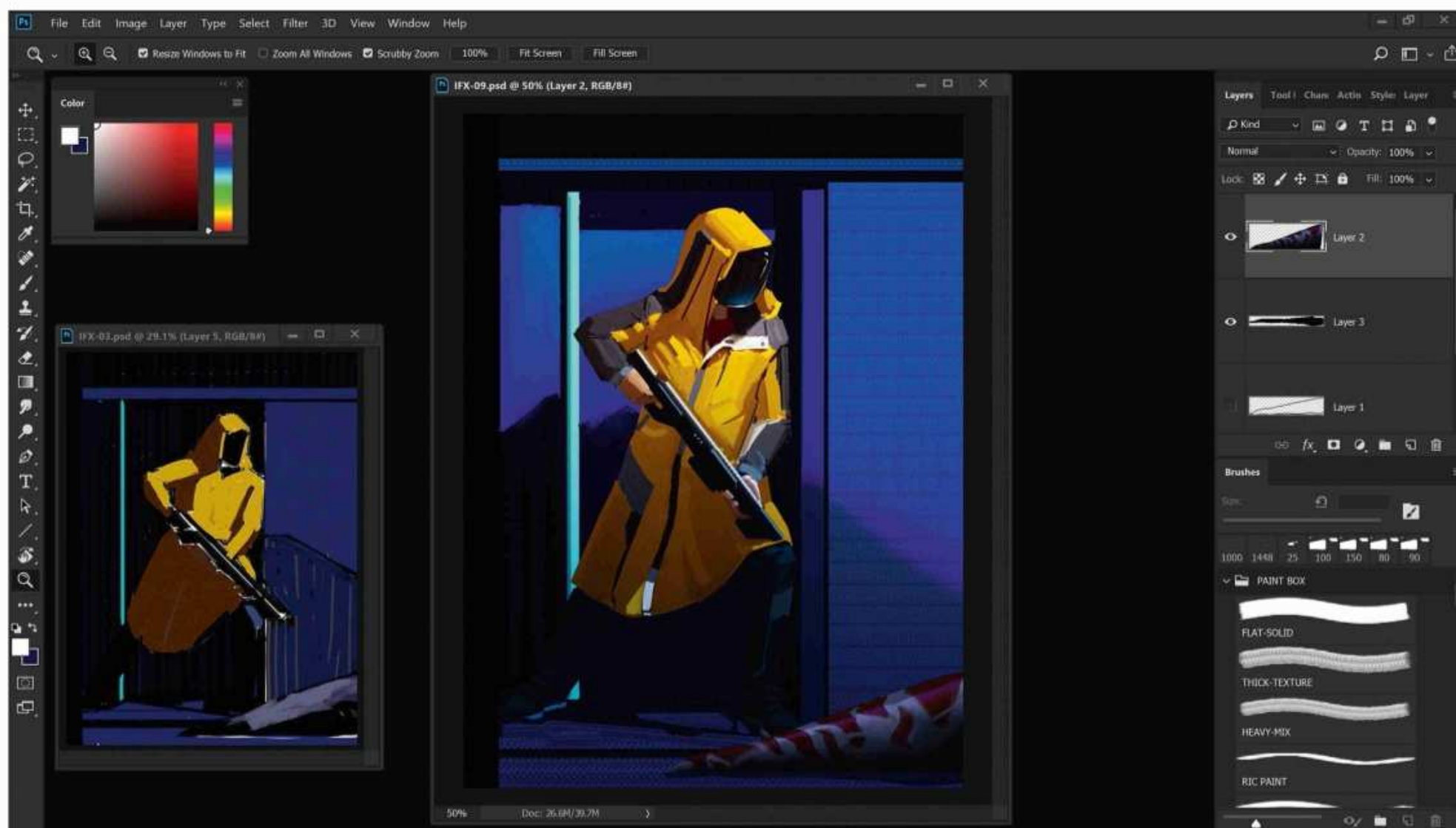
I then proceed to paint the figure using the Mixer Brush to pick up small areas of the reference photo. I pull down the jacket, using colours from the photo, always bearing in mind that these colours – even though they're in shadow – will still be vibrant. Any subtleties I might have in the end will be given by their tonal proximity with the surrounding areas, rather than by neutralising colours.



## 7 Make use of the Camera Raw filter

At this point I collapse all the layers and open Photoshop's Camera Raw filter (Filter>Camera Raw Filter). I will do a lot of work at Camera Raw, but a bit at a time. For now, I'll just use the Graduated Filter (G) to create a blue gradation and change in temperature down in the lower left of my image, making this portion of the image cooler than the top. ➡





## 8 Hinting at the creature in the scene

As can be seen in my initial composition, for an extra touch to the narrative I add a creature tail/tentacle at the lower right-hand corner. For this element I use a simple lasso selection, which I fill with a neutral colour so it doesn't stand out too much. I create a pattern of stripes with a warm colour on a separate layer on Overlay blending mode. I add some highlights and soft shadows as well.



## 9 Integration of colours

Now I add a glow to the green light. This light actually serves as a bridge between my overly bright and saturated yellow and the blue/purple background. I also integrate the shadows of my image and now the lower half of the figure seems to merge with the cooler, deeper shadow of the background. The yellow light on the jacket is still the brightest and most saturated note.



## 10 Second integration pass

Because we have a yellow dominating our image, it makes sense that it would generate light and reflect back, as a second light source over the darker areas around it. I then create a soft yellow glow around the figure's head to further increase the sensation of light on this area of the composition. I also create a reflection of the green light on the back of the character.

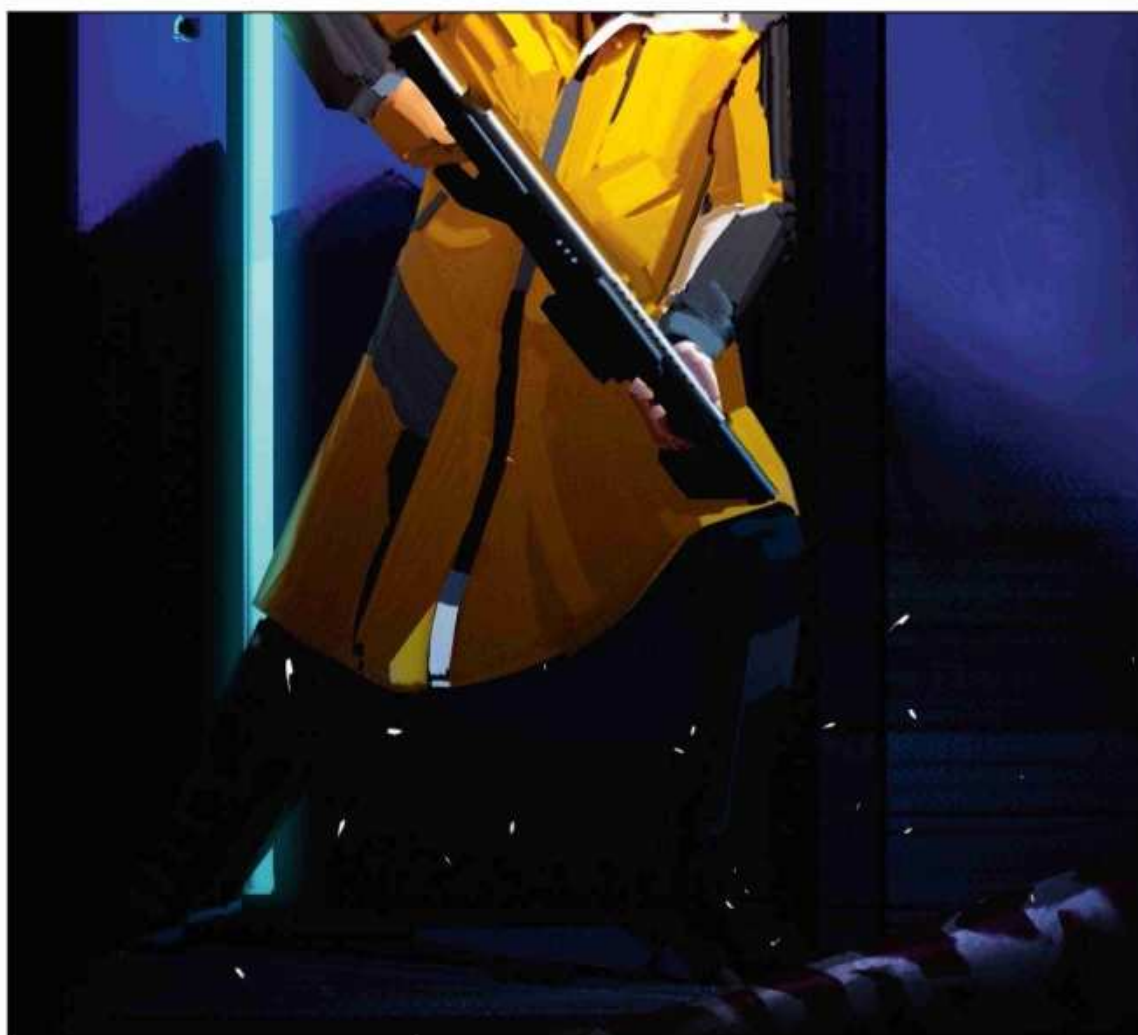






## 11 Touch-ups within the scene

I feel that the bullet holes on the wall on the top right of the image aren't helping the composition, so I decide to use a regular brush and paint over the wall, which also helps to soften the conspicuous texture. I also take advantage of this opportunity to add a biohazard sign and desaturate the purple colour slightly, which makes the yellow light shape pop out even more.



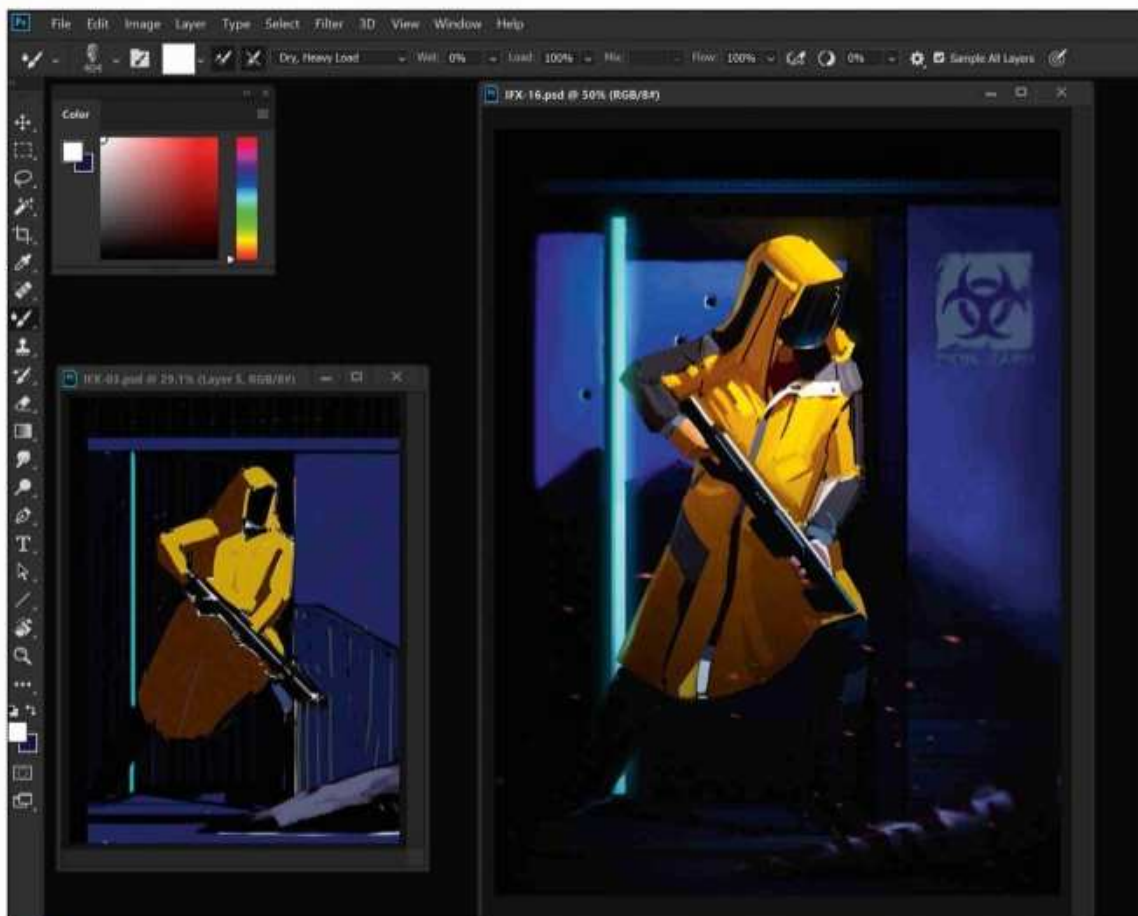
## 12 Sparkles introduce movement

I add more dynamism to the composition by painting some sparkles. I do this by creating a new layer, and using a duster-type brush I create the sparkles, first with white. I then duplicate this layer and darken it to a mid-grey colour. Next, I colourize the upper layer and set it to Color Dodge blending mode. A slight motion blur will create the illusion of movement.



## 13 Apply a blur to adjust focus

To create a softer, less artificial look I open the Tilt-Shift Filter (Filter>Blur Gallery>Tilt-Shift). I use these values: 15 pixels for Blur and 0 per cent for Distortion, with Symmetric Distortion unchecked. I then rotate the blur to make the centre axis aligned with my figure. The blur occurs after the dotted lines, at the extremities of the image. This effect creates a contrast between sharp/in focus and soft/out of focus shapes.



## 14 Finishing off the image

For my finishing touches I add a bit of grain to the image, still in the Tilt-Shift window, which enable me to blur the image and add the grain at the same time. This gives the image a film-like appearance. In the end, a potentially colour-clashing scheme has been made much more appealing and visually stronger through the use of saturated and desaturated areas and opposing colour temperatures.





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**Antoine Collignon**, concept designer

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# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



## Artist's Choice Award

Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...

5  
PRODUCTS  
ON TEST



### HARDWARE

#### 94 Galaxy S4 Tab

Samsung's new Android tablet is available. Is its portable drawing potential up to scratch? We find out...

### TRAINING

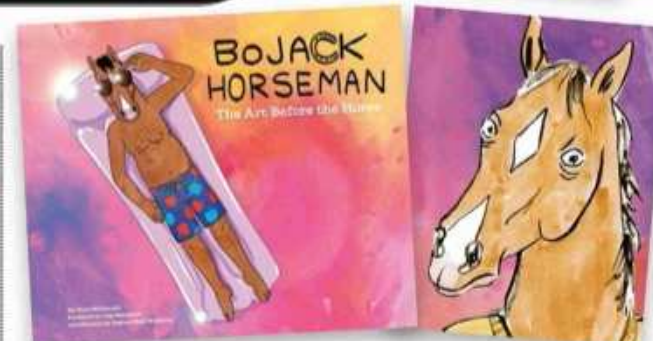
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#### 99 Lost in Space: The Art of Juan Ortiz

Blast off back to the 60s with this visual throwback to sci-fi TV series Lost in Space, which features poster art for every episode.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★★ Great ★★★ Good ★★ Poor ★ Atrocious



The Galaxy Tab S4 isn't without its flaws, but if you're looking for a drawing tablet first and foremost, it has a lot to offer.



Artwork by David Ardianayas Lojaya

## Galaxy Tab S4

**ON THE TAB** Samsung's new tablet is complicated for day-to-day use, but its drawing surface makes up for it

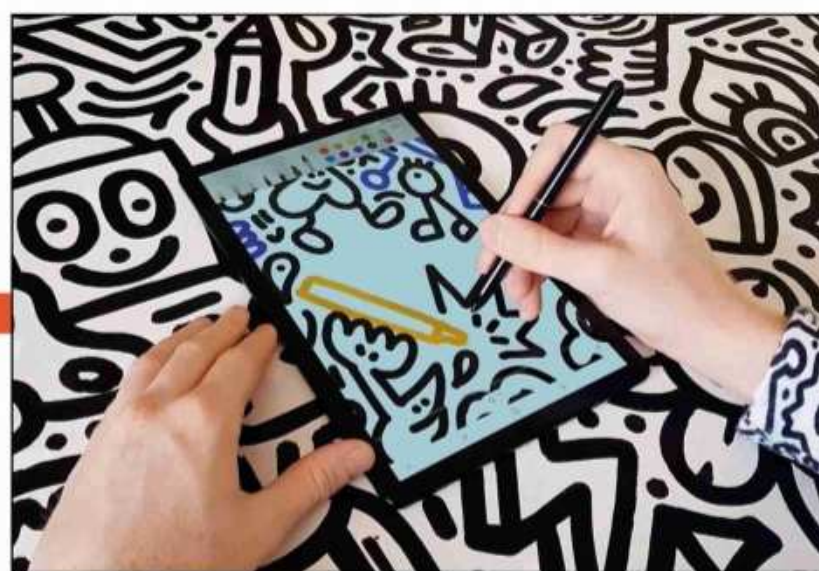
**Price** £599 **Company** Samsung **Web** [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com)

**W**hile Apple offers its premium tablet – the iPad Pro – in a couple of sizes and a variety of colours, Samsung is keeping things simple with this new, similarly priced device. The Galaxy Tab S4 just comes in one size, a 10.5-inch display, and gives you the choice of an austere grey or a glossy black body that's so impenetrable you could almost use it to recreate the monolith scene from *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

The minimalist feel isn't reflected in the Android operating system driving the Tab S4. It seems to get busier with

each release, with a lengthy setup sequence offering piles of settings and optional software downloads, and early use interrupting your activity with tips and advice. The feeling of busyness isn't helped by the new DeX mode, which presents an alternative interface more reminiscent of Windows running on a laptop. You can get an optional keyboard cover to clip on to your Tab S4 to complete the laptop transition.

As might be expected from the first try, DeX on the Tab S4 doesn't really compare with Microsoft's Surface running Windows 10, which offers a far



If you're happy to draw within the narrow 16:10 screen, the Tab S4 is ideal for creating art while out and about.

The S Pen is included in the price – take note, other manufacturers – and delivers a pleasant drawing experience.

more sophisticated pairing of desktop and tablet interfaces. Right now Samsung's Tab S4 is better at being a tablet than it is a laptop.

What artists really care about, though, is what a mobile device is like to draw and paint with – and the answer for the Tab S4 is “very nicely indeed”. The sensation of drawing is sublime, with just the right balance of smoothness and bite on the display. The S Pen (which is included in the price, unlike the iPad Pro's Apple Pencil) features 4,096 levels of





Entertainment fans will appreciate the widescreen display format coupled with four speakers able to support Dolby Atmos surround sound.

IN FOCUS

## THREE TAB S4 ALTERNATIVES

Explore these tablet options from Apple, Google and Microsoft

### iPad Pro 10.5

**Web** [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

**Price** £619



The price difference between Apple's flagship iPad and the Tab S4 seems trivial – until you realise that the iPad doesn't come with a stylus. Apple's Pencil is superb, but adds a not-insignificant £89 to the overall asking price.

### Pixelbook

**Web** <http://store.google.com>

**Price** £999



With some serious Intel power bubbling under the bonnet, this is more of a laptop you can convert into a tablet to run Android apps. The Pixelbook Pen costs £99, but only offers 2,000 levels of pressure sensitivity.

### Surface Go

**Web** [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

**Price** £379



Once you've bought the keyboard, the Surface Go pulls off the dual tablet/laptop trick more successfully than the Tab S4. But you'll also need to spend £99 on a Surface Pen, which delivers 4,096 levels of pressure sensitivity.

“The sensation of drawing on the Tab S4 is sublime, with just the right balance of smoothness and bite on the display”

pressure sensitivity, and feels responsive as you sketch, moving from the lightest of strokes to heavy mark-making without a glitch. A discrete clip on the pen prevents the stylus from rolling when you set it down: a thoughtful touch.

The pen also features a single shortcut button that's so inset that it's hard to locate it by touch – an annoyance if you tend to rotate your

pen in your fingers as you draw. And while the display is bright and colourful, its narrow 16:10 ratio won't suit every artist. But these are minor quibbles against one of the best tablet-based drawing experiences you can find – and the inclusion of the S Pen in the package when so many rivals charge you extra makes the Galaxy Tab S4 a compelling option for creating art on the move.

### DETAILS

#### Features

- Android 8.0 Oreo operating system
- Qualcomm MSM8998 processor
- 10.5-inch display
- 4GB memory
- 64GB storage
- S Pen stylus with 4,096 levels of pressure sensitivity
- DeX 'laptop' mode
- Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, USB 3.1
- Optional keyboard
- 249x164x7mm, 482g

#### Rating



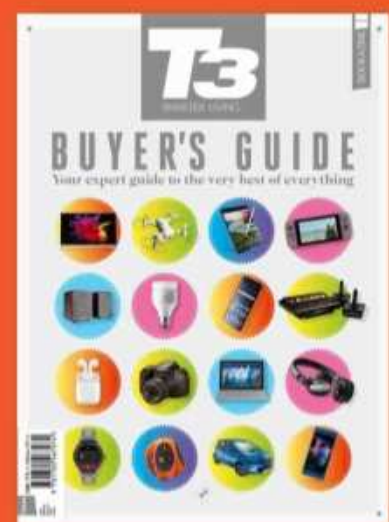


# VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE GAMES OF THE YEAR AT THE **36TH GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS**

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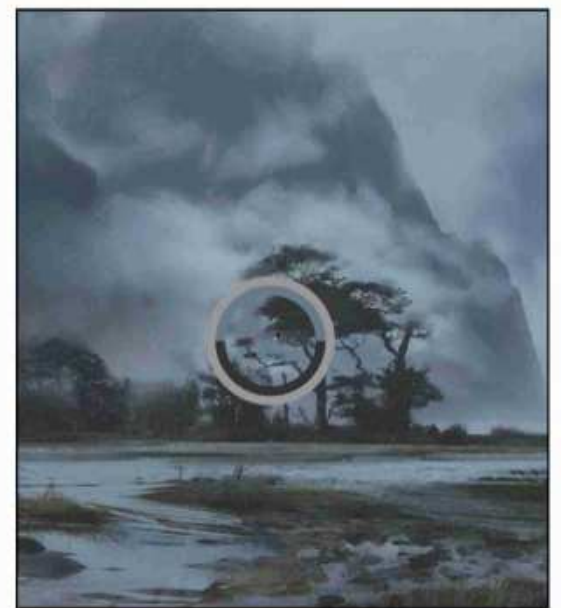


Its creation isn't covered in the video, but this painted thumbnail informs Stéphane's colour and value decisions throughout the video.

Spot the join: the early stages see Stéphane blending parts of different photos until the components start to resemble the original thumbnail.



This landscape concept art piece by Stéphane Wootha Richard is a beguiling combination of photobashing, painting and image manipulation.



## Designing Landscapes in Photoshop

**ALL IN THE DETAIL** Concept artist Stéphane Wootha Richard shows why there's more to Photoshop than you think in an exhaustive video tutorial

**Publisher** Stéphane Wootha Richard **Price** £3 **Format** Download **Web** [www.gumroad.com/wootha](http://www.gumroad.com/wootha)

**P**lenty of artists offering video training include their original Photoshop document alongside the video showing how it was made. Stéphane Wootha takes this idea and runs with it.

At 8,000x3,400 pixels, his environment concept painting is so large that it occupies nearly 3GB of the tutorial download by itself. At least this gives you the chance to zoom into the detail of Stéphane's image, which is an intriguing blend of near-photo realism with painterly brushstrokes and canvas-like surface textures.

The effect becomes clearer once you realise through the video that photographs form the bedrock of the composition. Using the photobashing technique that's popular among concept artists, and referring to a thumbnail sketch that sets the direction for the image, Stéphane brings in elements from different photos to create an original landscape that doesn't exist in reality. He makes use of selections and layer masks to



### DETAILS

#### Topics covered

- Build up a photo-montage
- Colour correction of photos
- Establish depth
- Put together a colour palette
- Blend brushstrokes into photos
- Create painterly textures
- Post-production techniques

**Length**  
164 minutes

#### Rating



present only the parts of each photograph he's interested in. At this point, you can see the potential of the image, but the components don't gel.

Next, it's a case of working over the top of the photo-collage, using a combination of painting and Photoshop image-manipulation to take control of colour and tone. Stéphane builds up layers and applies different blending modes and layer masks to create a true sense of depth in the composition, for example.

Stéphane assumes you're familiar with Photoshop's key tools throughout the video. There's no hand-holding here, but rather a forensic exploration of the principles behind creating a strong image, and how to manifest those principles through Photoshop. His narration is meticulous throughout the video's two-and-a-half hours.

If Photoshop is largely about using brushes for you, then you'll find this bargain-priced video will open your eyes to the possibilities of what you can achieve with its range of powerful image-editing tools.

### ARTIST PROFILE

## STÉPHANE WOOTHARICHARD

Formerly a professional musician and software engineer, Stéphane is now a concept artist and illustrator for animation, video games and publishing. As a self-taught freelancer, he's worked on various projects for companies all around the world, ranging from Legendary Digital Network to French comic book publishers Ankama and Delcourt. More recent projects include painting the backgrounds for the animated adaptation of Castlevania on

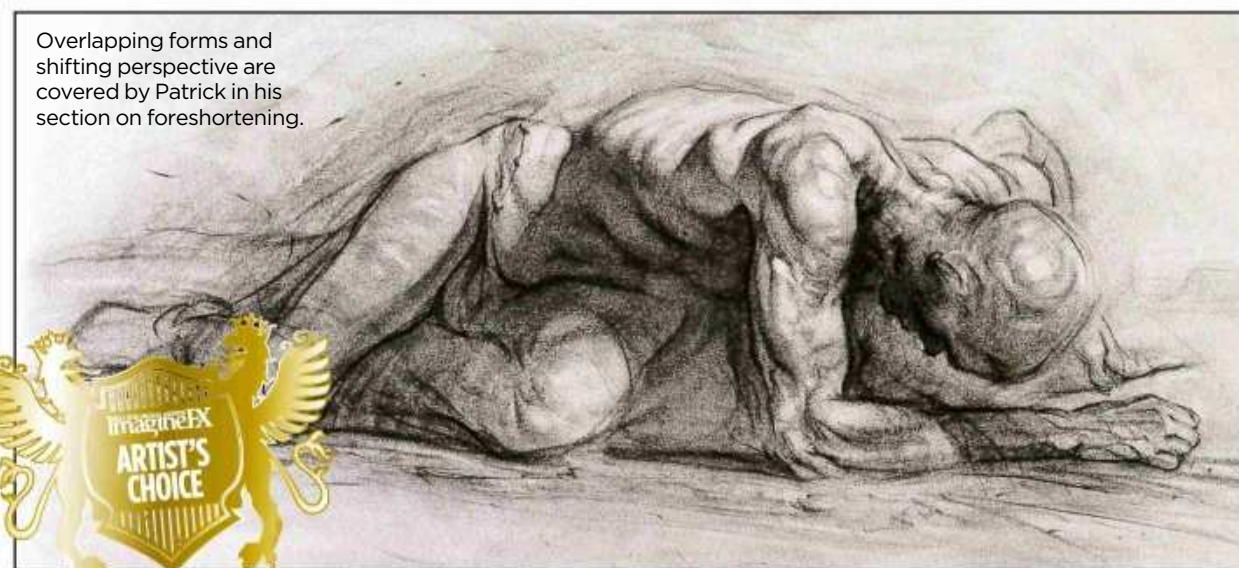


Netflix and creating promotional art for Tyler Bumpus's Swallowed World book trilogy.

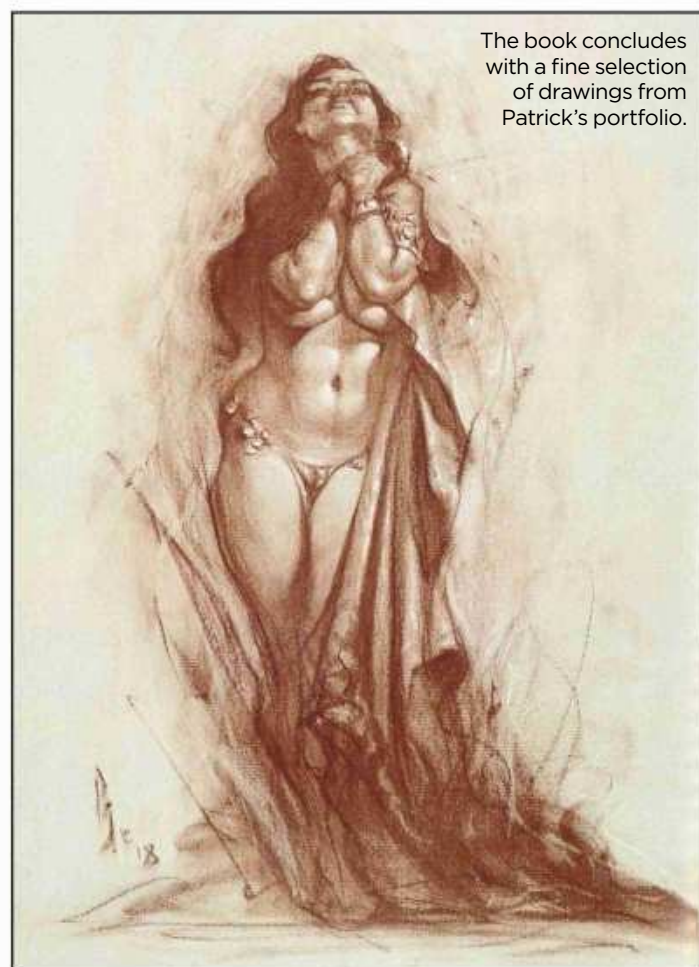
[www.wootha.com](http://www.wootha.com)



Overlapping forms and shifting perspective are covered by Patrick in his section on foreshortening.



The book concludes with a fine selection of drawings from Patrick's portfolio.



## Figures from Life: Drawing with Style

**STRIKE A POSE** As an in-depth exploration of life drawing, the passion for art in this book is deliciously infectious

**Author** Patrick J Jones **Publisher** Korero Press Ltd **Price** £20 **Web** [www.koreropress.com](http://www.koreropress.com) **Available** Now

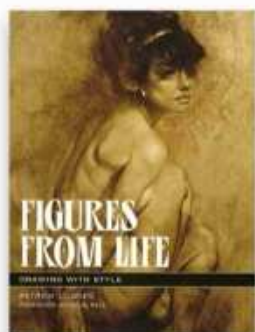


**Observational drawing from the human figure is a classic skill, and one that can take a lifetime to perfect.**

**Artist and teacher Patrick J Jones began honing his creative skills at just 17, and now, over 30 years later, he shares his experience and knowledge in this tutorial-style book.**

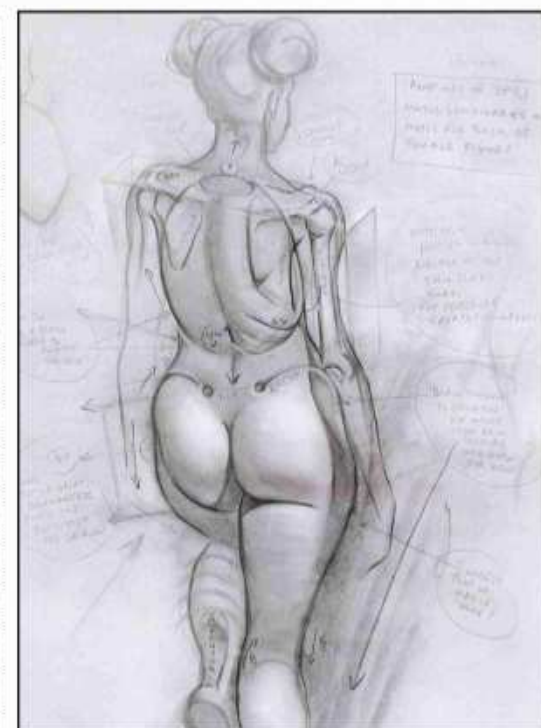
Its luxurious-to-the-touch cover, with its raised typography for the title and a striking sketch of a woman kneeling, provides an early glimpse of the glory held inside. Patrick's artistry and advice is spread across 160 pages, and contained within six wonderfully in-depth chapters.

Each of the topics under scrutiny – gestures, long and short poses, artist's studio, rhythm of life and “love



devotion surrender” – open with a detailed step-by-step guide on how to draw a certain pose, each stage accompanied by a large photograph for reference. It's here and in the following pages, which feature the most intricate and impressive drawings of the male and female form, where you get your money's worth. Not only does each chapter spell out how to draw a specific pose, but also they also include a number of invaluable artistic tips. Common mistakes and problem areas are noted too, as well as the

“Each chapter opens with a detailed step-by-step guide on how to draw a certain pose”



Patrick's keen to emphasise the importance of balancing gesture with anatomical structure.



Here, Patrick covers the drawing techniques of massing and omission.

occasional elaboration for tackling certain trickier areas of the body, such as the head, hand, arm and leg.

At A4 size, this book would easily fit in most standard-sized bags, and while it's fairly thick and the quality clear, it's surprisingly light to carry around. One slight downside is the size of the body copy, which is a little too small when you consider the word count. But then this allows for larger images so it's all about balance. The image-to-word ratio will work for some and not for others. Either way, it takes nothing away from the book's brilliant content.

There's a strong sense of authority surrounding Figures from Life: Drawing With Style, and it's not difficult to see why. The fact that art legend Julie Bell has written the book's foreword should tell you all you need to know about Patrick's talents as an artist. And if that doesn't, the expertise and passion for art that oozes out of the other 159 pages certainly will. If you want to master drawing the human form, then this is the reference book for you.

**RATING** ★★★★★



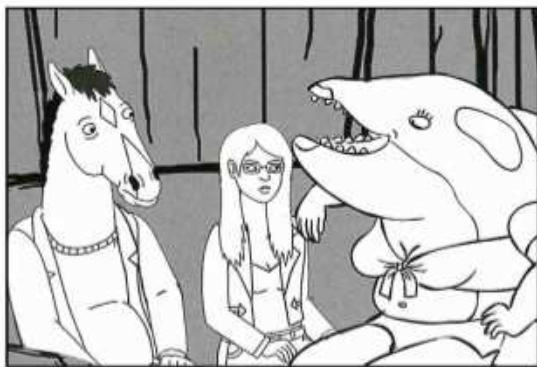
# BoJack Horseman: The Art Before the Horse

**GIVEN FREE REIN** Discover how BoJack Horseman, the animated adult comedy-drama series, came to be with this in-depth look behind the scenes

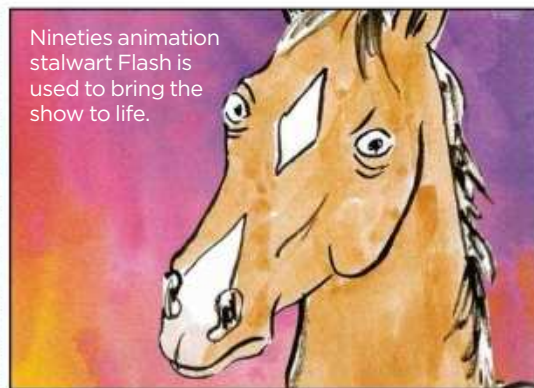
**Author** Chris McDonnell **Publisher** Abrams **Price** £27 **Web** [www.abramsbooks.com](http://www.abramsbooks.com) **Available** Now

**T**he world of Netflix series BoJack Horseman is full of quirky characters. This new hardcover book, BoJackHorseman: The Art Before the Horse, offers readers an all-encompassing look at just how much time and effort has gone into making the popular series.

The fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the show from its earliest conception all the way through to



The book covers the many iterations that each character design went through.



season four includes everything from first email exchanges about the show's creation between Raphael Bob-Waksberg (creator) and Lisa Hanawalt (producer), to original concept art, storyboards and backgrounds.

While this book will appeal to the thousands of BoJack fans for obvious reasons, it would also serve any aspiring concept artists wanting to work in the world of TV and/or film



very well, too. The book has 240 pages, over which are 300 colour illustrations and countless more sketches of animals and humans in different poses, working different expressions, as well as ideas and final designs for various scenes and backgrounds. It's a great resource for artists and hippophiles alike.

**RATING** ★★★★★

# Lost in Space: The Art of Juan Ortiz

**OFF THE WALL** Blast off back to the 60s with this visual throwback to kooky sci-fi telly series Lost in Space, which features poster art for every episode

**Author** Juan Ortiz **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** [www.titanbooks.com](http://www.titanbooks.com) **Available** Now

**L**ost in Space was a weird slice of 60s science fiction TV. And Juan Ortiz is clearly a big fan. So much so, in fact, that he's turned his unique eye for poster design to the iconic series and put his creations together in this oversized, lavish hardback.

As the saying goes, 'A picture is worth a thousand words.' That's very much the case with this book, the only text being a short interview with Juan



Poster detail from the episode War of the Robots, in which two iconic characters from film and TV meet.

over the first few pages. It's not the most insightful, we have to say, but it does reveal a few gems about the artist behind the artwork.

What follows, however, more than makes up for Juan's short but sweet answers, with 94 posters, all full almost A3-sized pages celebrating the characters and episodes of the iconic and much-loved series. Season one, two and three are covered in order, each episode reimagined into a visually striking poster, and indexed at the back to make finding personal favourites a cinch.

For anyone who enjoys bright, bold poster design, Lost in Space: The Art of Juan Ortiz is a book that'll look good on their coffee table. However, for true Lost in Space fans it's a necessity.

**RATING** ★★★★★



Juan's poster work for the first episode from Lost in Space depicts the Jupiter 2 space ship leaving Earth.



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# Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

**Workshops assets are available...**

If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 6 to see how you can get hold of the video.



## This issue:

### 102 Traditional art FXPosé

Explore this month's selection of the finest traditional art, which has been sent in by you!

### 106 Workshop: Achieving scale in your paintings

Wayne Haag reveals the principles he applies to his sci-fi work which enable him to generate a sense of epic scale.

### 114 First Impressions: Chris Seaman

Find out why this American artist most identifies with his own line of miniature monster portraits.



# FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Ama Teibel

**LOCATION:** US **MEDIA:** Watercolour, gouache, ink **WEB:** [www.absoluteama.com](http://www.absoluteama.com)

Ama is heavily inspired by Japanese animation. She specialises in painting grungy magical women who submerge themselves in a realm of pastel paradise.



### 1 MORNING TEA BRINGS LIFE TO ME

"It's the simple things in life that can make our day become something more than mundane, but it's up to us to allow ourselves the happiness for that to happen."

### 2 ABSORPTION

"Slowly lost in thought and purpose as those who have influence and power take charge of others' lives. Focus on the good and you shall be released."

### 3 AWKWARD SITUATIONS

"We'll occasionally encounter people who want to exploit others; they'll use them just to gain something for themselves. Floating around in this cruel world, it's important to shield ourselves from harm."

### 4 FREE ME FROM THE STARS

"This is the state in which dreams become reality and all good has reached the ends of the world. We can finally drift off to sleep and rest in peace."













## Kirsty Rollinson

**LOCATION:** England **MEDIA:** Pencils, fineliners, Pentel ink brushes **WEB:** [www.kjrillustration.com](http://www.kjrillustration.com)

Kirsty is a narrative and character illustrator. “I love the wonky nature in my world,” she says. “There’s nothing better than letting loose on a piece of paper, armed with only a pencil and a great idea.”

### 1 GRIMM TALES

“This was a bit of a mammoth piece. I love working in detail, and I tried to include as many Grimm Tales as I could – they’re even present in the frame of the piece.”

### 2 THE CROOKED MERCHANT INN

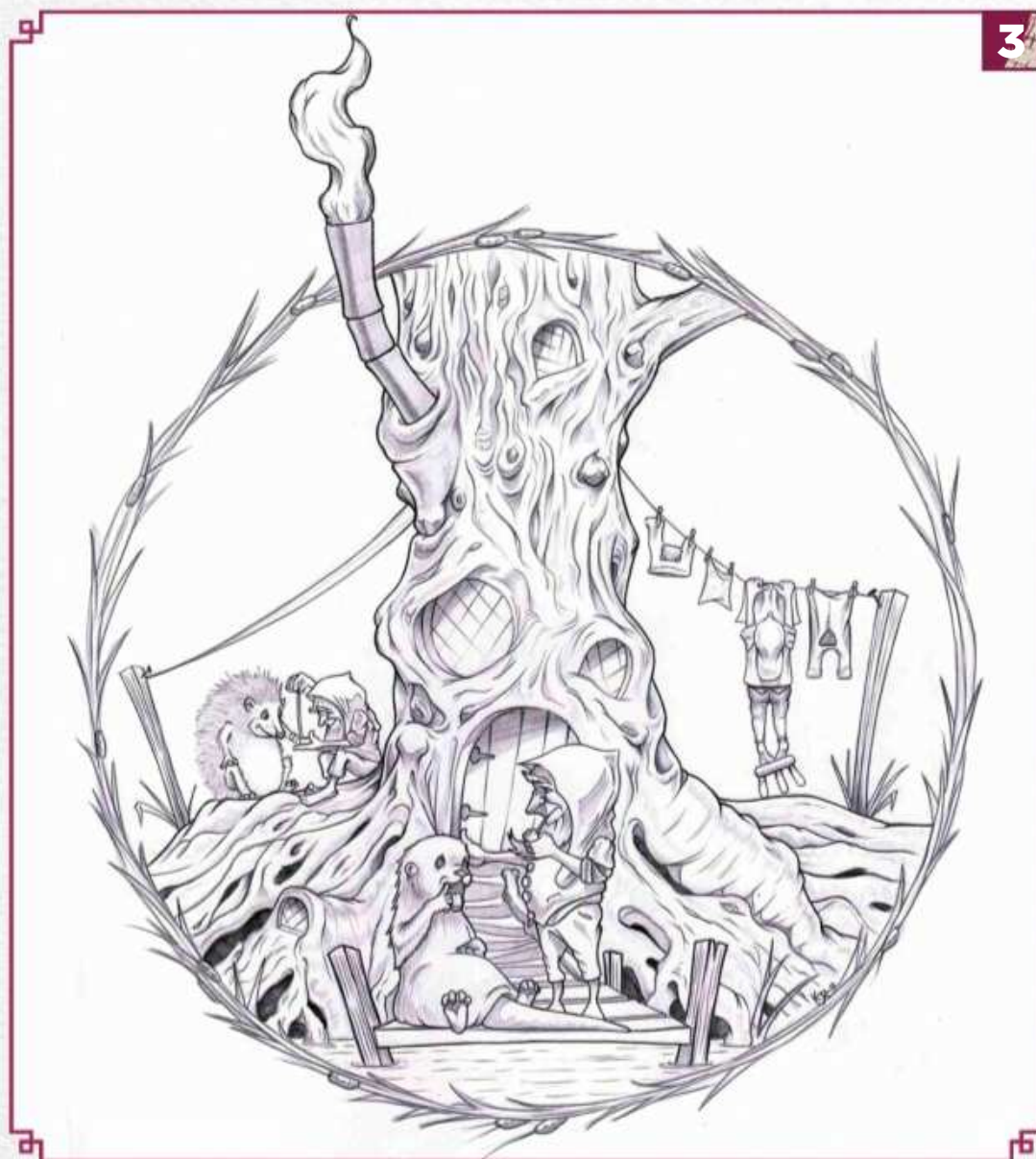
“I had the best fun creating the characters from this drawing. I always have various stories running through my noggin and this is just a scene from one of them.”

### 3 RIVERSIDE CARE

“I love animals and see so much wildlife where I am. I also like working with frames, so it was good to play with this one.”

### 4 RISEN

“I love graphic novel art, especially the horror stuff, so I tried my hand at it. In the background is the famous priory of Christchurch that I can see from my window.”





**Pencil**

**Oils**

## ACHIEVING SCALE IN YOUR PAINTINGS

Veteran concept artist **WAYNE HAAG** reveals some of the principles he applies to his sci-fi artwork, which enable him to generate a sense of epic scale

**R**eaders who have seen my work will be familiar with the sense of scale I depict in my environments, both digitally and traditionally. In this workshop we'll go over some basic principles that will help communicate the idea of large scale in your own pieces.

Conveying a sense of scale isn't just a matter of drawing huge objects within your scene. Those objects must appear correct relative to other

elements, through the use of value, colour, repetition, viewpoint and so on. Photographic lenses and their relationship to apparent scale is a little-understood aspect of illustration and will also be covered. As always, basic lighting design, colour choices and composition will strengthen your work.

A couple of the matte paintings I worked on for the film *The Fifth Element* are, to my eye now, failures of scale. Perhaps one day I'll correct

them, but for now my goal is to help you avoid some of the mistakes I made back then. This is by no means a comprehensive study of scale, but hopefully a good beginning. So let's get started, shall we...?



Wayne completed a BA in photography at RMIT Melbourne in 1994, before starting his film career in 1996 on *The Fifth Element*. He now works as a concept artist, teacher and oil painter. See more of his art at [www.ankaris.com](http://www.ankaris.com).

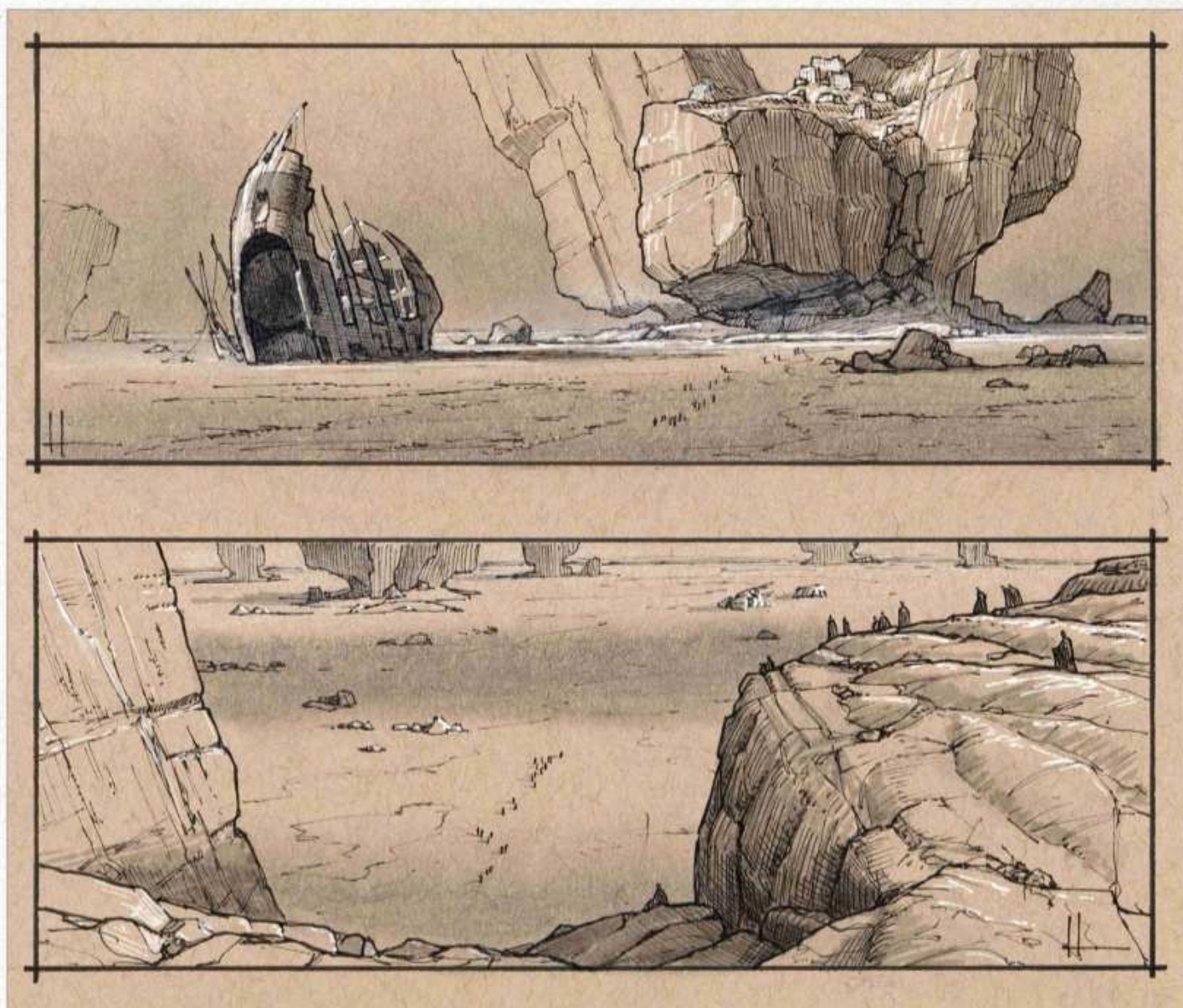
### 1 **Point of view**

This is one of the most difficult aspects of all illustration: where do I view my scene/subject from? What point of view (POV) best communicates the concept?

Would we paint a portrait of a person from directly above or from the floor? Of course not. However, a lower angle looking up at a large object quickly conveys height. This can also be communicated from above, by inducing our own fear of falling! Which one is right for the scene will depend upon the original idea for the work.

When creating any scene, I do my best to visualise myself within the environment and wonder where would I be if I were to 'shoot' the scene with my camera. Where would I be standing as the action unfolds?

These two sketches show two takes on the same scenario. One is a lower view from the position of the figures travelling towards the rock formation, while the second is from atop the rock looking down. Both convey scale, so it's now a matter of seeing which POV best fits the story.







“Anything that breaks the frame can be left to the imagination”

## 2 Choose the right lens

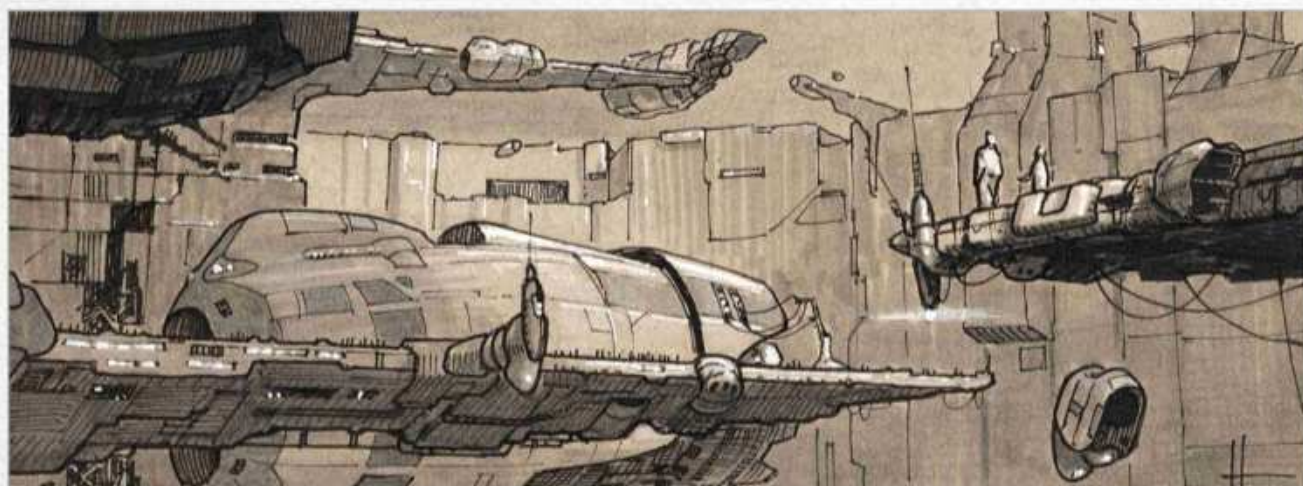
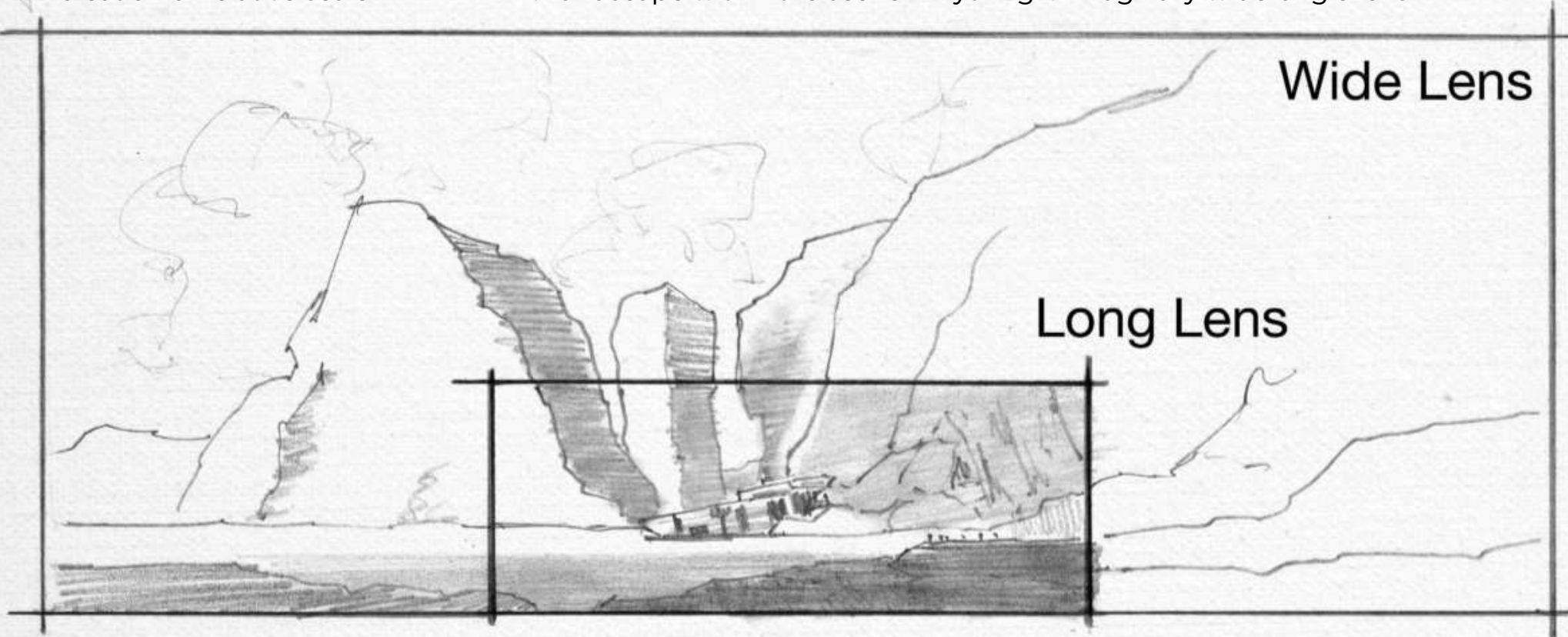
This tip requires a whole article for itself, but suffice to say that longer focal length lenses, for example a 150mm zoom, provide a visual compression of perspective, a flattening of elements within the scene and starts to show a truer indication of relative scale.

One side effect is the cropping of objects beyond the picture frame that would otherwise be visible with a wide-angle shot.

A longer lens enables you to visually edit out most of the information in front of you, yet still show an enormous portion of the landscape within the scene. Anything

that breaks the frame can be left to the imagination and is usually perceived to be larger than it might actually be. I use this to effect in my painting, *Desert Wreck*.

In the sketch below you can see the original painting frame and the view if I had composed with an imaginary wide-angle lens.



## 3 Repetition of objects

Here, you can see how the repetition of objects work in the scene. While we don't see the foreground ship and landing platform as complete objects, there's enough visual information to let the viewer know that the docked ship at the platform in the background is a repeat of the first. The tiny figures seen on the foreground platform convey the size of the docking environment.

You can also see this principle applied in my painting *Rendezvous* (tip 10). ➡





## 4 Values and atmosphere

Value is one of the easiest ways to help convey scale of objects in the distance. Atmosphere through dust, pollution and smoke lifts the value of shadows as they recede into the distance. The amount varies depending on how thick the atmosphere is and where it's concentrated. Light rays reflecting off objects within a shadowed area don't have the power to overcome the intensity of the light striking the atmosphere itself, which is between you and the distant shadowed areas. Light hitting countless atmospheric particles overrides any detail that might otherwise be seen within those shadows. To see this principle in action, refer to the lighter shadowed areas of the background wreck (the circled #4 area in the painting).

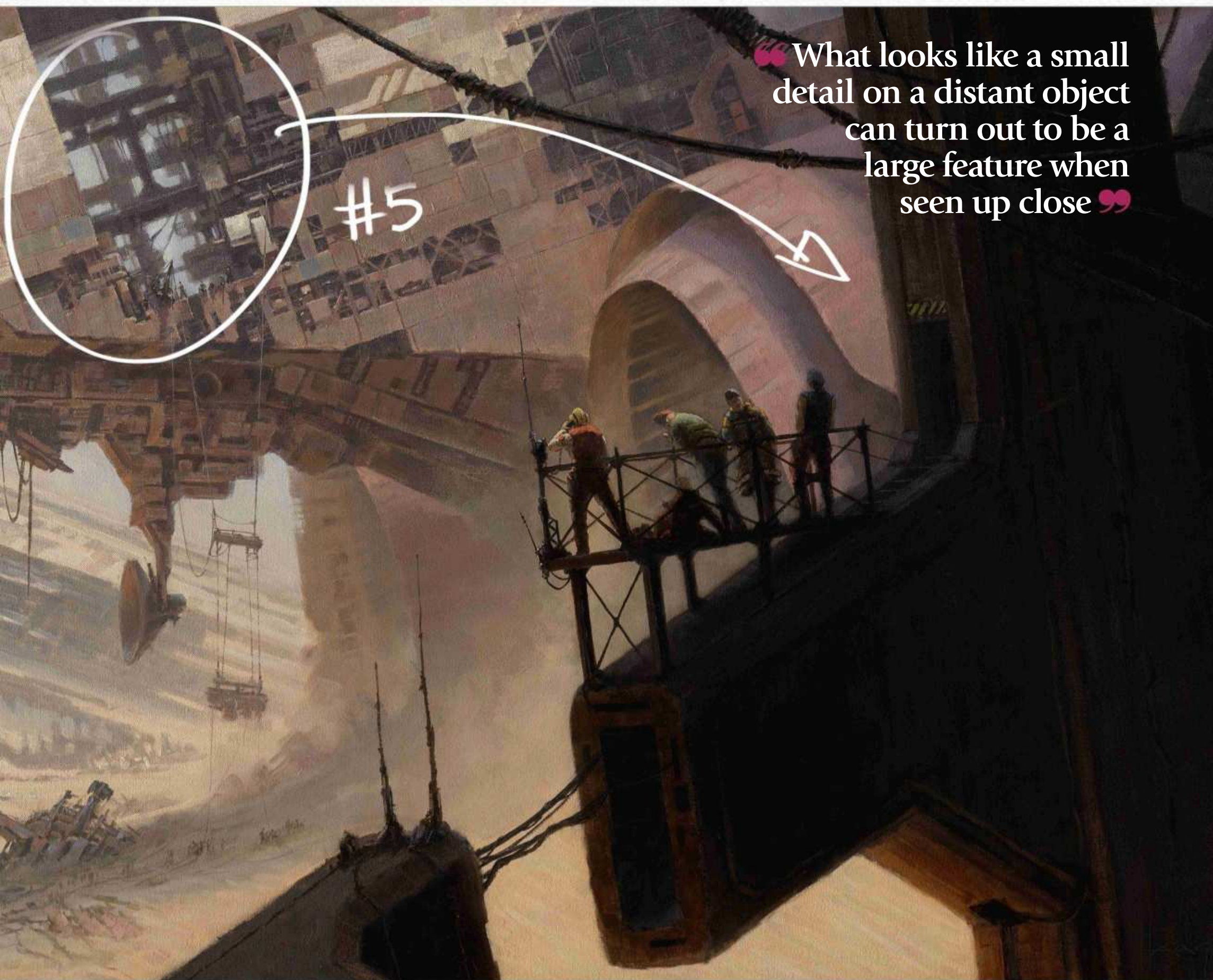
## 5 Size of storytelling details

This relates to the repetition of objects within a scene. What looks like a small detail on a distant object can turn out to be a large feature when seen up close. The juxtaposition of a human figure against such 'minor' details will also strengthen the overall sense of scale. Take the circled #5 area: the figures on the foreground platform attached to the heavy beam gives the viewer an idea of the scale of the beams seen within the belly of the mid-ground ship.

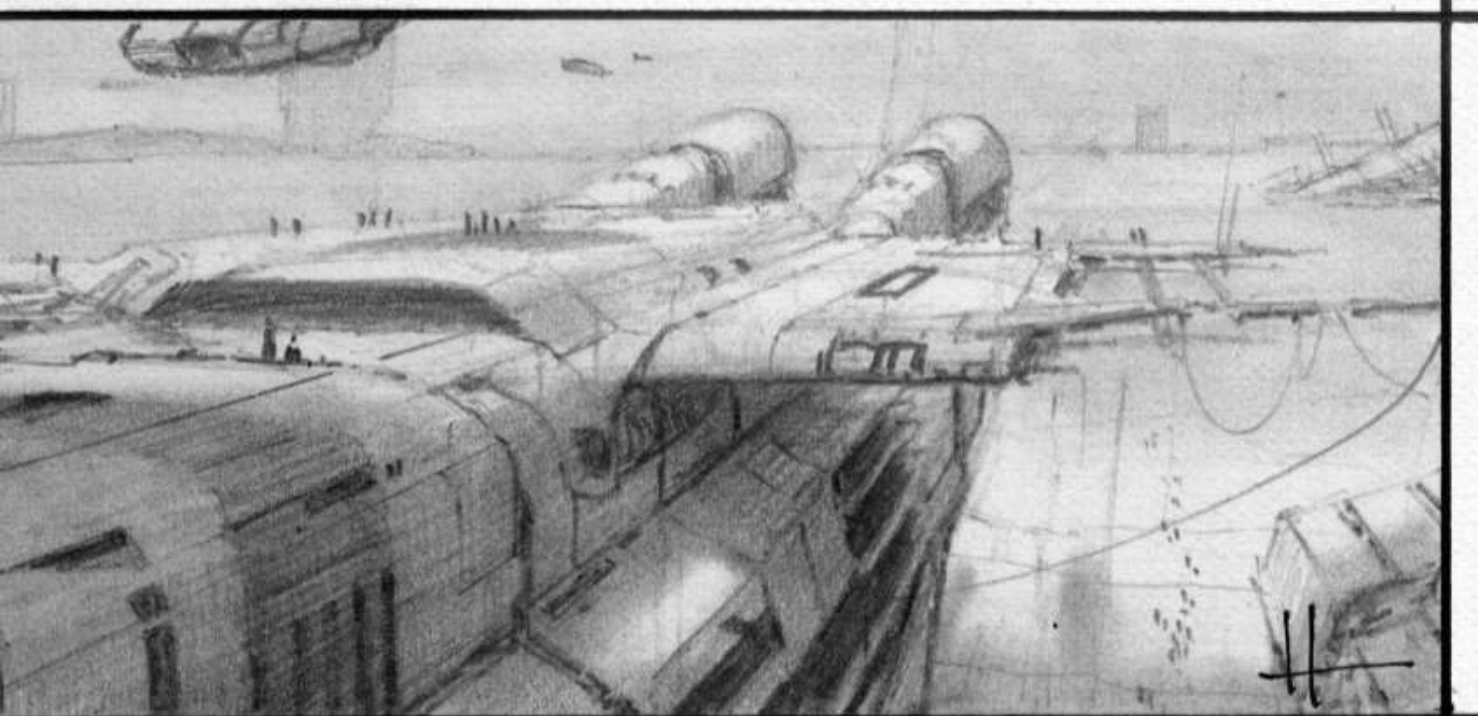
“Atmosphere through dust, pollution and smoke lifts the value of shadows”







“What looks like a small detail on a distant object can turn out to be a large feature when seen up close”



### 6 Vary your line weight

This is related to tip 4's value and atmosphere advice, in that you want to convey distance and scale even at the smallest thumbnail stage. Varying your line thickness and weight of shading will help quickly communicate atmosphere and scale. Use a harder 4H pencil and a light touch for background objects, and go for a softer 4B for the foreground details. To give you an idea of how much visual information even a thumbnail sketch with varied line weights can convey, this image is only 12cm across. ➡



## 7 Step by Step: Even pros can get it wrong...



### 1 CAPTURE THE IDEA ON PAPER

The beginning of all art is most likely a sketch. This is one of my sketches on toned paper that eventually became an oil painting. My original intent was to finish a sketch a day, not thinking that it would become a full painting. This sketch captures my intent.



### 2 WORKING UP THE CONCEPT IN GOUACHE

I painted this gouache study while at a convention, again not thinking that it would go beyond this stage. I actually completed an oil study after this as well. However, in the translation from sketch through the gouache study, I feel that I've lost something in the finished piece. Read on to find out why...



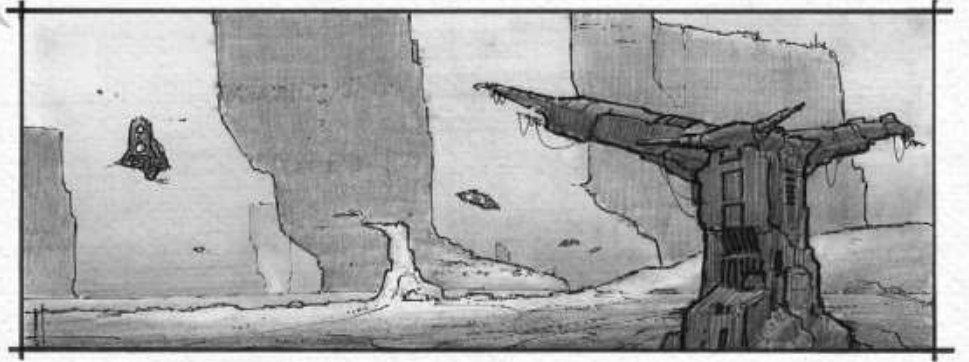
### 3 FALLING AT THE FINAL HURDLE

My POV is too high for the figures under the wreck and we can't really make them out, which robs the viewer of a scale reference – thus defeating the purpose of the painting. I wanted to show this because I consider the painting to be a failure on some level and to show that even pros can mess it up!



## 8 *Foreground vs background details*

The level of detail apparent in the foreground tower provides all of the information needed to tell us what the details might be on the distant mid-ground tower. There's no need to paint things in distant objects if you can describe them in close-up elements. If you need to paint distant details, keep them confined to the lit areas of the object, and suggest them loosely and sparingly.



## 9 *Placing details within shadows*

The amount of detail should also be kept to a minimum within shadows. In my painting *Dust Devil*, the details are merely suggested in the shadows and are progressively reduced by the time I get to the background vehicle. Even though the distance from foreground figure to the background vehicle isn't that great, I still want to keep the details to a minimum. This helps keep the focus on my main character.



“Placing a figure into a scene is an easy way to help convey scale”

## 10 *The value of the human figure*

Placing a human figure into a scene is an easy way to help convey scale relative to other objects in the environment, even if those objects are fantastical in nature. In my painting *Rendezvous*, the figure next to the wheels of the foreground rover enables the viewer to understand the true scale of the background rover – even though we don't see the entirety of the foreground one. ➡➡





## 11 *Using textures in the foreground and background*

Texture can provide an artificial sense of detail and thus a closeness that you may not want in distant objects. The sky appears to us to be texture free and smooth compared to the rocks at our feet. Here, I've kept the background atmosphere smooth so as not to draw attention to itself. It can be hard to eliminate this when painting with oils on canvas, but very easy to control digitally. As the rock cliffs recede into the background, the amount of detail and texture is reduced.



## 12 *Make edges do the heavy lifting*

Decreasing sharpness where it's not required can help to separate foreground objects from background objects, particularly where those elements overlap. John Singer Sargent was the master of edges – study his paintings!



## 13 *The right colour palette*

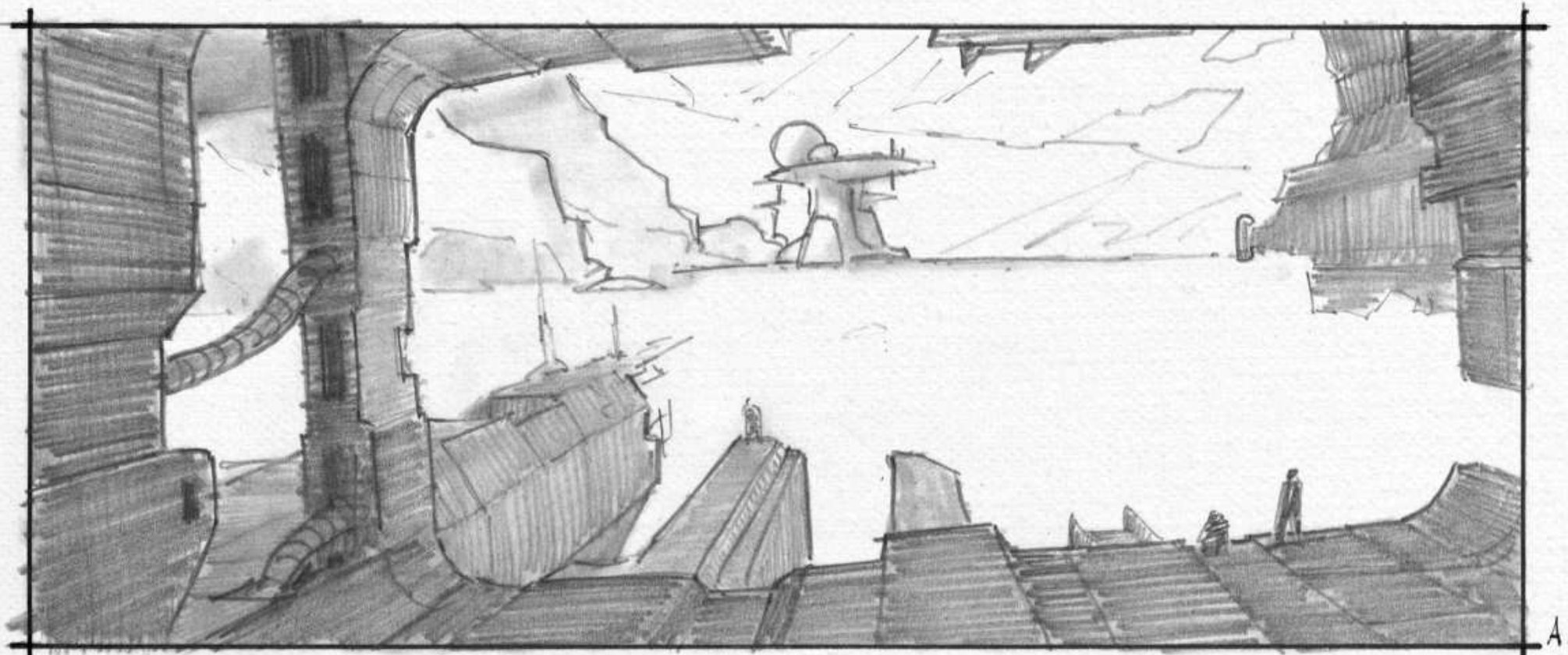
With the understanding that colours will decrease in intensity the further away they are, communicating scale and depth can be helped by limiting the choice of colours of distant objects to a more neutral palette. Restrict the more intense colours for your

focal point and allow the receding elements to progressively become less intense. In my painting, *Sky Burial #3*, I set out to showcase the bold colours of the foreground wreckage against predominately muted colours.

A lot of landscape painting is primarily the art of painting with a variety of greys that

have been shifted towards a particular colour. Think of a grey of the required value mixed with a hint of colour, rather than a raw bright colour dulled down. It's faster to start with a neutral grey and tint it with pigment – traditionally at least – than drag a full-blown colour down to what's needed.

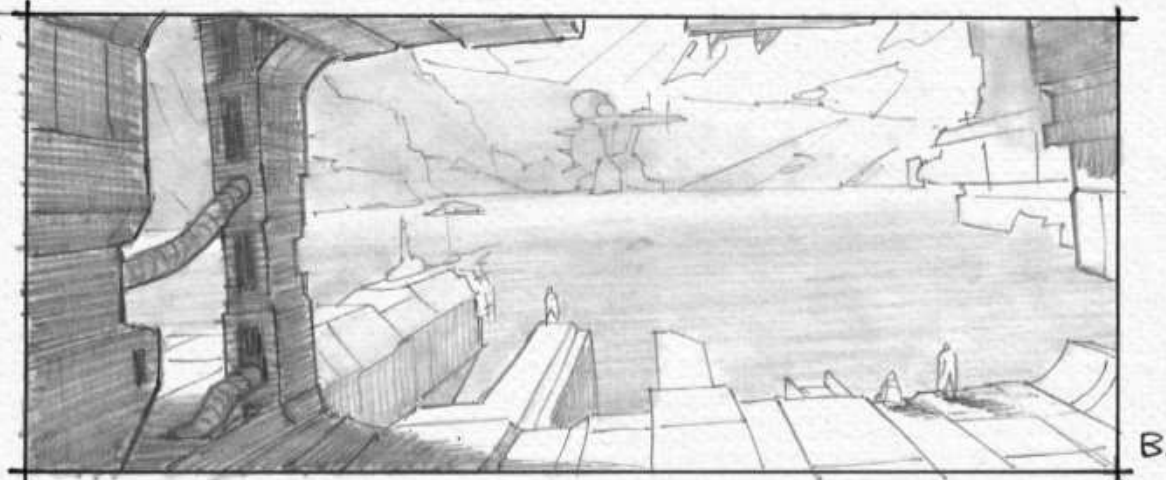




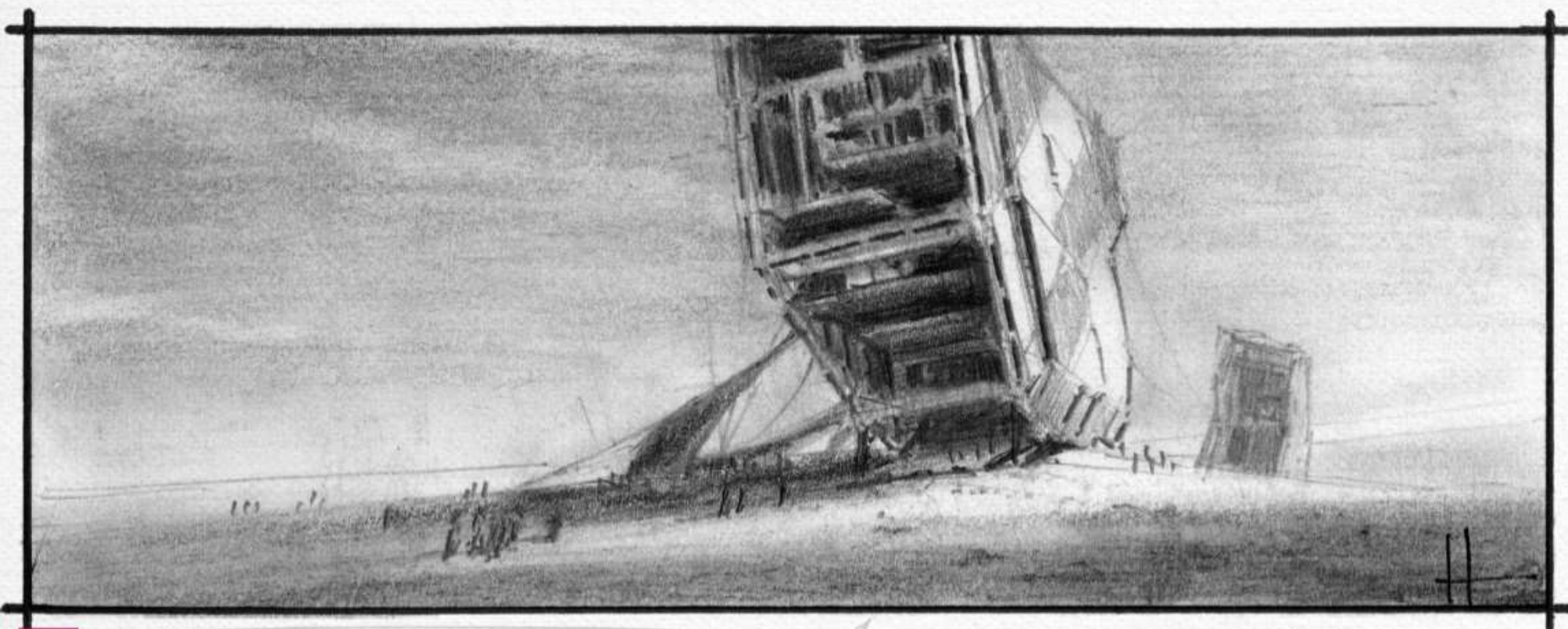
## 14 Lighting design

Good lighting design isn't restricted to scale, but is needed in all good picture-making so I'm briefly covering the topic here. I start with a light/no light situation, rendering either digitally or traditionally, and establish what will be in light and what will be in shadow. This is done at the lowest resolution level of the picture. So in this sketch there are two values: white for light and a grey (pencil or marker) for shadow. The justification of that lighting scenario can come later.

Don't get hung up on the 'how' at this point – concern yourself only with the design of the relationships between light and shadow. The focal point is not always in light and can very often be in shadow against light.



“ I start with a light/no light situation, and establish what will be in light and what will be in shadow ”



## 15 Keeping things simple often results in a strong piece

This tip is pretty self-explanatory but it's always good to be reminded of it. Keep it simple. Simple composition, simple concept, simple execution, simple tools and materials and simple presentation. Those points combined will, more often than not, produce powerful results. They are also achievable, which means you'll finish the piece and that's the point. Finish the work, learn from it and move on to the next one. ●



# First Impressions

✧ Chris Seaman ✧

We talk to the artist with a growing brand of mini monsters...



**What was your first paid commission?**

It was for a children's book from a small publisher based in

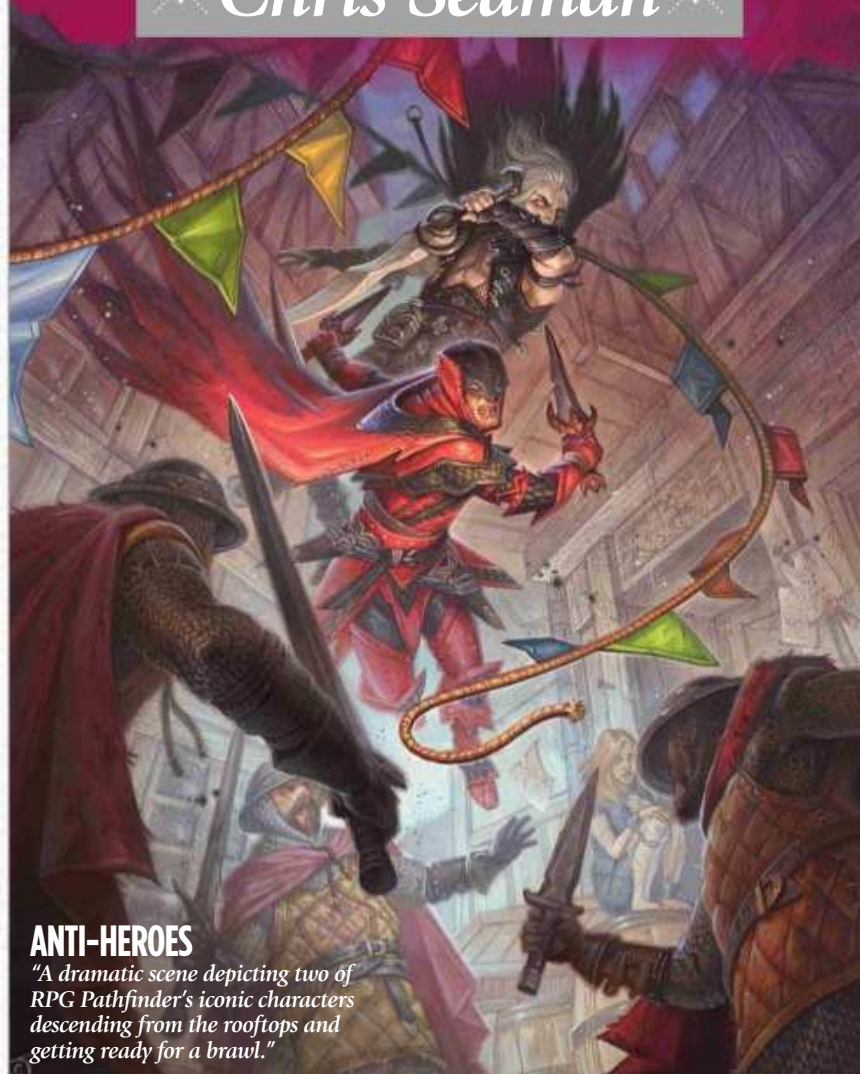
Ohio while I was finishing up at art school. It was a challenge to finish my fantasy art portfolio and hit the deadlines for the book. I completed 14 full-colour oil paintings on time and got paid \$70 a page. I also painted them 1:1 scale to save time. Each illustration was about four by four inches.

**What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two artworks differ?**

My last piece was for Magic: the Gathering. There's no comparison to what I'm doing now versus what I did as my first commission. I was young, reserved in my artistic choices and was worried about messing it up. I've built up my confidence over the past two decades and the choices I want to make for my current work, I make. It's the art I want to make, not the art I have to make.

**Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?**

I grew up moving a lot until about the age of nine, when my parents settled in northern Ohio close to Cleveland. Moving a lot, I was never settled and didn't have many friends growing up. My brother and I were close in age and we were, and still are, best friends. Having creative parents with not much money, we excelled at entertaining ourselves in the early 80s. Then I discovered Star Wars, Master of the Universe, Thunder Cats, Transformers and G.I. Joe, and



## ANTI-HEROES

"A dramatic scene depicting two of RPG Pathfinder's iconic characters descending from the rooftops and getting ready for a brawl."

“Illustration has always been about giving the viewer enough visual information”



## COUNT DIABLO DELASKULL

"This Cameo Creep is husband to Countess Muerta DeLaSkull."

all I wanted to do was draw my own heroes and villains.

**Can you describe the place where you usually create your art?**

I have converted a room into a studio space. It's quaint and cosy, and everything I need is at arm's length. Easy to get to my paints, brushes and, of course, my cup of coffee.

**Do you have an art tool or ritual that you simply can't live without?**

Preparation to begin a drawing or painting has always been essential to my work habits. Gathering reference or photographing my own has been a staple that I use as a tool to tell my stories. The more reference

you can lean on before you start a painting, the better your painting will be. Illustration for me has always been about giving the viewer enough visual information.

**What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork?**

Friendship. I find that the older I get the more important it is to surround yourself with good friends and family. People who don't "get it" have moved on, while others who are interested and passionate about the same things are bonds that have carried me through my life. Silly observations or unique insights that a friend might suggest continuously spark ideas for painting and drawings.

**What character or scene that you've painted do you most identify with?**

I most identify with my Cameo Creeps. They're miniature monster art – like adult Garbage Pail Kids! They reflect my sense of humour, my love of history, horror and fantasy all wrapped into a neatly designed product line. They tap into my nostalgia of my youth and have become the art I'm most proud of.

**Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?**

I don't know how to answer that question. Life will take you in all directions. There's no path that's certain, safe or out of bounds in the arts. Although the goals are the same for every artist – "work hard and make good art" – success is in the eye of the beholder. If it was easy, everyone would do it.

**What does the future hold for you?**

My Cameo Creeps brand continues to grow and before the end of the year I'll have some big news that I can't wait to share! New Kickstarter, new Cameo Creeps and a new look! I'm so excited for where these tiny monsters have taken my career.

Visit [www.chrisseamanart.com](http://www.chrisseamanart.com) for more about Chris and his Tiny Monster Paintings.



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Kamila Stankiewicz, illustrator



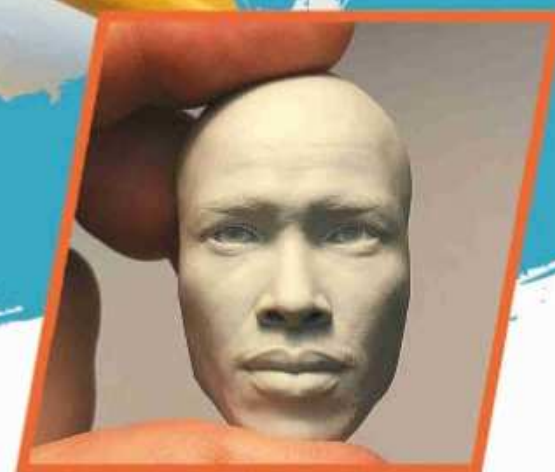
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